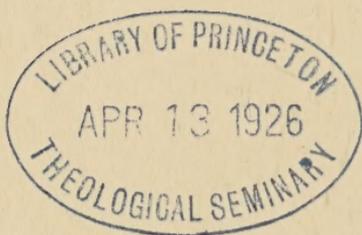


# IMMORTALITY

*In the Light of Modern Thought*

REV. F. C. CAPOZZI





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# IMMORTALITY

## In the Light of Modern Thought

*Mors Ianua Vitae*

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REV. F. C. CAPOZZI, Ph. B.

*St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Wind Gap, Pa.*

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*This is one of the four works, of which "honourable mention" was made in the world-wide Churchman Contest, held in 1923-1924.*



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*To the memory of all those American soldiers, who, by the heroic sacrifice of their lives on the battlefields of France gave us the most luminous proof that love is stronger than death and that the soul, the divine inspirer of love, self-sacrifice and all transcending reality cannot be conquered by death.*

F. C. C.

Dear Father Capozzi:

Your essay is one of the noblest attempts I know of to explain the inexplicable thing, Immortality. You have given due recognition to the fact that it can never be completely explained: this is one of your essay's merits.

The bearing of ethical philosophy on Immortality, as emphasized in Chapter VI is, I think, a most valuable and permanent contribution to this vital subject.

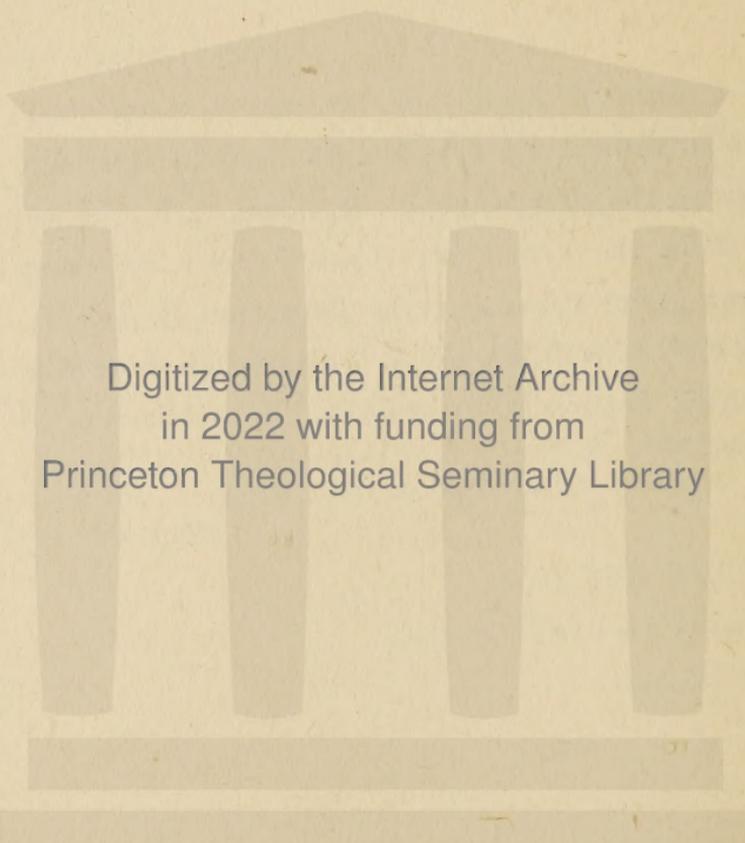
The thing, as a whole, is very erudite and the language a pleasant English with a high Latin content. It is very charming.

WALTER KLEIN

General Theological Seminary,  
New York City

I wish to express my deep thankfulness to Messieurs F. M. Kirby, the Hon Major W. R. Coyle, A. P. Cleaver, Ch. A. Mills, the Ven. Dean Howard Diller, the Very Rev. Dean Wilmot Gateson, the Reverends E. S. Clattenburg, F. A. MacMillen, W. N. Weir, and all those who have helped, financially or morally, the publication of this work.

F. C. C.



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# IMMORTALITY

## In the Light of Modern Thought

### INTRODUCTION

#### PHILOSOPHICAL AND CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION

#### OF IMMORTALITY

#### I

The progress of human thought may be likened to a conqueror's chariot, which attains triumph by riding over heaps of ruins. The great leaders of that march, in order to build, have had to destroy.

Copernicus, in order to give us our immense universe, had to replace the narrowing Ptolemaic system of astronomy. Bruno, Bacon, and Descartes, in order to make mankind the gift of experimental method, had to build upon the ruins of the merely logical system of Scholasticism. Kepler, Galileo, Newton, before elaborating their system of celestial mechanism, had to disprove theories held for centuries. Darwin and his school could not have conceived the stupendous law of biological evolution without undermining natural and theological beliefs which were a part of the intellectual patrimony of mankind.

The modern atomic, hydrogenic and electro-dynamic theories, with regard to the constitution of matter, could not have been formulated without setting aside Aristotelian and Scholastic views. For long periods of time we have been speaking of matter and form; now we

think of the cosmos in terms of matter and energy. For centuries we thought of the various organic beings as having originated by the direct acts of a creative principle; now the great majority of men of science hold a primordial proto-plasmic cell to have been the principle which has gradually evolved itself, from the lower grades of life, to the highest organic and spiritual forms.

Yet human thought, in its triumphal march, has been unable to attack successfully the fundamental truth of the existence of God and its logical corollary, the Immortality of the soul. These two truths have stood like gigantic rocks, against which the waves of an insufficient knowledge have beaten in vain. The doctrine of Immortality has come out of the attacks unimpaired, and, what is more, strengthened and invigorated. Nowadays, during the first quarter of the proud century of lights, faith in Immortality is as strong and indomitable as it ever was. The growth of science, far from shaking this faith, has made the reality of the Infinite more evident, the mystery of the universe more august, the influence of the supernatural deeper and vaster, the affirmation of Immortality more positive.

Faith in Immortality seems to be something necessary, indispensable. Reason demonstrates it. The will demands it. The heart hungers for it.

## II

There are, however, different views of Immortality. There is a conception of real Immortality, and one of what is but a shadow of Immortality.

The desire of surviving the grave and perpetuating ourselves in the memory of posterity, this longing of ours to live as a moral and spiritual power in the world, seems to be only a faint echo of true Immortality. The

"Non omnis moriar" of Horace, and Cicero's eagerness to see the fame of his name not limited to time, but "cum omni posteritate adaequandam," beautiful as they sound, appear to be but dim reflections of Immortality.

The conception of Immortality, based on our human instinct for duration and perpetuity, is easily proved to be inadequate. It is maintained that in the empirical "ego" of each man, and all men, nature, life and race, with all their present powers long for the "more," for intensity and duration, the two measures of being. The "ego" wants to increase itself, take more vigorously possession of its own world, and stretch itself into the future.

Of this tendency toward being and "more"being and continuity in being, the act of self-consciousness, wherein human personality resides, is the translation and the symbol. And since every man, because of his aptitude for an indefinite multiplicity of forms, tends to be not only a champion, but also a compend of the species, it is obvious that the instinct of perpetuity affirms itself in him, under the aspect of a thirst for Immortality and a faith in the same.

Yet, this desired Immortality, which is a form of man's self-knowledge and the expression of his most intimate instincts, is to be ascribed, if ever, to universal humanity, and not to the individual. It is known, indeed, how humanity attains historically its scope not through the duration of individual men (who enjoy only a brief cycle of life, grow old and perish), but through the multiplication of the individuals and the transmission of the acquisitions which they gradually make.

### III

No less incomplete is the conception of Immortality entertained by the Hegelian Benedetto Croce, who, in

his "Critica" (p. 154) writes: "Even philosophy affirms ultra-earthly and super-individual Immortality by demonstrating that each act of ours, as soon as completed, detaches itself from us and lives an immortal life. We ourselves, who, really, are nothing but the process of our acts, are immortal, for to have lived is to live always."

This "minimum" of Immortality, which the Italian thinker establishes and demonstrates philosophically, borders almost on the annihilation of Immortality, since the very subject of it is done away with, and, in such a precise way both the beginning and the end are assigned of that process which is the empirical "ego".

#### IV

Nor can Immortality be equivalent to the merely ethical conception of the "conservation of value," consisting in the persistence of the essential and the real.

Höfdding, Myers and others apply Immortality to things which the universe has gained, things which, once acquired, it cannot let go. The higher attributes of existence, knowledge, love, beauty, artistic achievement, unselfish affection, sacrifice, joy, all that may be generalized as "good" and worth-keeping, cannot finally perish. They endure henceforth and forever as part of the eternal Being of God.

Such a conception of Immortality appears intrinsically deficient. The actions of man are supposed to live; but the personality of man is lost. All that is great and beautiful lives; those who accomplish it, perish. The very soul of Immortality is here wanting. Man lives in posterity as a beneficent influence; his teaching is a power for good; his example is a factor of human progress and an ideal inspiration for uplift; but man does not feel and know it.

Moreover, this man's participation in the struggles for the progress of the race does not include the conscious sharing of man's soul in the final triumph of moral and social perfection. Can it be Immortality?

## V

Immortality has been also proved by the eternity of nature. What is what we call nature but an aspect of the divine Being? If what was at the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end, it follows that durability and permanence become attributes of nature. To state that nature is an aspect of the Deity is explicitly to postulate eternity for every existing thing, and to conclude that what we call death is not annihilation, but only a change.

No really existing thing dies, but only changes its form. Physical science teaches us this, very clearly, concerning matter and energy. Not only physical and chemical forces are correlated among themselves, but also life-force is transmutable to, and derivable from, them. Therefore everything in nature is immortal.

Is there anything more apparently transitory than a dew-drop, formed by atmospheric humidity? In the morning it glistens on the grass; the sun comes up, and, under its action, it goes, apparently, into nothingness. Its perceptible existence was only momentary. It has vanished almost as soon as it was born.

Yet we know that it is not dead altogether. As a drop it was born, and as a drop it dies; but it lives as aqueous vapor. It persists with all those properties which will enable it to condense once more, a hundred times, indefinitely, into cloud or drop. Even the little drop, then, possesses the attribute of Immortality! . . .

The same is true of every particle of natural, living

substances. Such substances, groupings, arrangements, systems are apt to break into their constituent elements and cease to cohere in an organized aggregate. We may call this disintegration, or breaking up of an assemblage, or destruction. Yet the essence, the intrinsic reality, the soul of things, is permanent. Nothing dies!

So, then, what about life? Can the particles of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, which shaped themselves into the form of a tree, or a beast or man, vanish into a nonentity. Can it become something which is really nothing?

Not so. Nor can it be so with intellect, will and memory, nor with love and genius, nor with all the manifold activities which at present act and express themselves through matter. They cannot cease to be. They did not arise with man. They are, and will ever be, as eternal as God Himself. How mysterious is this unity of life running through the universe! What an awful thing is this kinship between the human and the divine!

## VI

However, the Immortality which science attributes to nature is not the one which we claim for the soul of man. The former resolves itself into the indestructibility of matter and force. It is a pantheistic absorption of man's life in the universal life. It is the losing of ourselves into a soulless permanence of nature.

Man's Immortality possesses more determined and specific characteristics. It is a "personal" Immortality. It includes essentially the permanence of individuality. It is the survival of man's conscious personality over the life of the body. It is the creature's conscious communion, in an eternal life, with its Creator.

Immortality has been proved from the almost universal belief in some form of it, beginning from the

earlier animistic cults down to the highly developed philosophical system of Kant.

Others have demonstrated Immortality by the instinctive consciousness of mankind with regard to the ethical incompleteness of actual existence, demanding a completion in a future existence.

Others have employed the juridical argument, deduced from the anomalies of present life, exacting a correction in a world to come.

Laying aside these, and many other analogous, arguments, which are not lacking, indeed, in persuasive strength, we shall consider only those whose character is more strictly scientific.

*Will my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in your deeps and heights?  
Must my day be dark by reason, O ye Heavens, of your boundless  
nights,  
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and your fiery clash of meteorites?*



## CHAPTER I

### EVOLUTION AND IMMORTALITY

*"A fire-mist and a planet,  
A crystal and a cell,  
A jelly-fish and a saurian,  
And caves where cave-men dwell;  
Then a sense of law and beauty,  
And a face turned from the clod."*

#### I

All objections advanced against the belief in Immortality can be reduced to these three: 1. Man is a product of nature, and, consequently, he cannot claim exemption from the universal law of evolution and dissolution; 2. Spirit depends on matter, and, therefore, when the latter disintegrates it carries with itself the perishing of the former; 3. Thought is a function of the brain, which means that the spiritual transcendence of the soul is a groundless claim.

The first of these statements brings us face to face with evolution, the most significant of all scientific truths. Evolution is no longer a theory. It is the most evident of all doctrines. It is the foundation of all natural and biological laws. Darwin's revelation far surpasses, in its significance, the discovery of the cosmological laws by Copernicus, Galileo and Newton.

Evolution is the fundamental purpose of nature. Nature does not make men or things. She grows and develops them. She evolves man from a spermatozoic cell, through nine months of gestation in the womb. She grows her trees out of acorns, her chickens out of eggs.

Evolution is written on every page of the great book of Nature. It is a magnificent revelation written on the granite of the mountains and the wings of the butterflies, on the waters of the ocean and the vapours floating in the air, on the flames of the nebulae and the splendours flashing out from the pupil of the human eye. Evolution is as much God's revelation as that contained in the Bible.

Everything in the world is evolution. Religion, civilization, progress are growths out of superstition, barbarism and a relative stasis.

Evolution has affected not only the physical, but even the metaphysical world. Metaphysics which was once founded on the immobility of the absolute Being, is now based on the movement and the eternal "becoming" of the Being. Psychology is no longer description or demonstration, as Aristotle and Plato conceived it, but a true drama. It is the dramatic history of the Spirit in the world.

## II

The principles on which evolution is based are absolutely incontrovertible. Nobody could deny the fact that life-forces are transmutable into, and derivable from, physical and chemical forces. Embryology is positive in its teaching with regard to the structural unity of plants and animals, which calls, necessarily, for their origin from one-celled form. Anatomy and physiology demonstrate that animals and men are similar, not only in physical structure, but also in physiological function, often bone for bone, muscle for muscle and nerve for nerve.

What more? Physiology and psychology have proved, in a luminous way, that animals possess logical and emotional faculties, such as intelligence, memory, will,

passions, etc., and that these faculties are evolved from inorganic matter. Psychology evidences also the fact that there is much in common between the mental processes of animal and man.

These and other scientific facts and phenomena explained, correlated and harmonized into a great biological system are what we call evolution.

The evolutionary scale, resting on force and matter, and reaching to the highest intellectual and volitive forms, is composed of the following steps: 1. elements; 2. chemical compounds; 3. vegetable life; 4. animal life; 5. rational, spiritual, moral and immortal life. The physical and chemical forces of nature develop into the lower forms of life-forces; these, in turn, evolve into the "anima" or intelligent principle of animals; the "anima" gradually perfects itself to the extent of becoming the self-conscious spirit of man.

Animal life, represented by the 4th step, though derived from the vegetable, it is a higher form of life-force, producing the phenomena of sensation, intelligence and will. The forces of phenomena characteristic of the 5th step, i.e. self-consciousness, reason, free will, spirituality and Immortality are derived from the preceding stage, yet they represent a new and still higher plane of life.

Thus our interpretation of evolution, which is that of Joseph Le Conte, the illustrious geologist of the University of California, has two essential features, the first of which consists in holding the forces of nature as different forms of the one omnipresent divine energy. God's self-conscious Spirit is outside of nature and inside of it. It transcends matter and yet is immanent in it.

Is this pantheism? By no means. The description of the great drama of life-origins, as found in Genesis,

tells us that when the earth was as yet without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1.: 2). This second verse of the first chapter of Genesis has for us an immense significance. It makes us realize that what we call physical and chemical forces of nature is only a different name for the Spirit of God working in nature. To say that the elements develop into chemical compounds, and that these, in their turn, produce vegetable life which gradually evolves into animal life is to say that the divine Spirit takes on, successively, higher and higher forms, in the course of cosmic time.

The other essential feature in our doctrine of evolution is the appearance of new, unexpected and unimaginable properties and powers, coincident with every new development of the universal energy into higher planes. Every climbing from one step to the other, in the scale of life, is a veritable new birth.

True, the preceding lower form is the subject matter of the next higher development; yet, at the moment the higher step is reached, something new appears, something whose life and manifestations are absolutely in excess of the intrinsic potentialities of the lower grade of existence.

All this implies that, all the way, throughout the evolutive process of life, the Spirit is constantly at work. This means that man, his body as well as his mind and soul may very well be the product of matter, yet not of matter alone, not of matter left to itself, but of matter as guided, controlled and moved by the conscious divine energy.

## III

The means by which this upward movement is realized are a gradual passage from diffusion to concentration, from extension to intension, from generalization to specification. It is essentially a process of "individualization" not only of matter, but also of force.

By increasing individualization the universal Spirit moves, in its upward development, toward more complete and perfect forms of life. In the first step of the life-scale (the step of physical and chemical force) this divine energy is in a generalized condition, diffused, unindividualized, pervading all nature. This step corresponds to the first two days of the creation according to the Genesis (v:1-10), when God created the formless and void substance, which evolved into the light, firmament and sea.

The same energy, which, in its progressive ascension to higher forms, individualizes matter, but, as yet, very imperfectly, becomes what we call the life-force of plants, i.e., vegetation. It is the work accomplished during the 3rd day (v. 11-13).

The same energy, more intensely individuating matter, and itself more intensely individuated, yet not completely, not exhaustively, we call the "anima" or living principle of the animals. The individuation of divine energy in the animal soul marks such a great stride toward completeness, that it foreshadows the spiritual soul of man. This work of the Spirit takes the 5th and part of the 6th day (v. 20-25).

Finally, still the same energy, completely individuated as a "separate entity", and therefore self-conscious and immortal we call the spirit of man. This crowning of God's creative work takes the rest of the 5th and the 6th day (v. 26 and foll.).

Thus, in our view, the vital principle of plants, the animal soul and the spirit of man are but different stages, in the womb of nature, of that Spirit which "moved upon the face of the waters." It is due to the action of the Spirit, working in nature, that matter, at first formless and lifeless, acquires gradually shape, light and life.

This same Spirit which, at the very beginning, by its moving upon the face of the waters, formed firmament, sea and dry land, now brings out also grass, plants, the great sea-whales, the beasts of the earth and man.

Truly, then, man was made out of "the dust of the ground," since the intermediate forms, from which he was developed, were an evolution of matter.

#### IV

However, the development of man's spiritual mind from the animal soul is not entirely analogous to the latter's development from vegetable life. There is, in the evolution of man's soul, something more, greater, higher, which, in the scale of life-development, places it in a unique relation.

It is only in man that "Spirit comes to birth." In elements and chemical compounds Spirit is in a diffused and shapeless state. "And the earth was without form and void" (Gen. 1. 2). In plants Spirit begins to shape itself, to form an embryo. In animals Spirit makes greater strides toward individuation and the possession of a life separated more and more from the universal life. It is quickened, indeed, but still incapable of independent existence. It is still in a physical connection with nature. True, is no longer the embryo, but, rather, the fully developed organism; yet it is still gestated

by mother nature. In brief, in the animal soul, Spirit is still unconscious of self.

In man, at last, Spirit separates itself from nature, grows capable of independent life, is born into a new and higher plane of existence. Nature is no longer the gestative, but only the "nursing" mother of the Spirit.

This gestative method of the creation of the Spirit is a most fundamental and significant fact in the evolution of life. Without it, the whole geological history of the earth becomes absolutely meaningless. If man's soul was to be made at once out of hand, why all this elaborate preparation by evolution of the organic kingdom?

Existence and life brought about by child-birth is, in many ways, a true illustration of the results of Spirit-birth. The embryo, no matter how fully developed and mature for individuation it may be, must, in order to enter the higher relation of manhood, sever its umbilical connection with the mother. Even so Spirit, in order to enter into the higher relation of God's sonship, must break away from physical connection with the forces of nature and exist as an individual, a person, a self-consciousness.

Again. Child-birth marks a sudden and complete change in the whole plan of the child's existence and life. What formerly lived as a part of the mother, now lives as a totality of existence. What was only in a "mediate" state of existence, now is an immediate entity. What was a flesh of the flesh, bone of the bone and soul of the soul is now a body and a spirit of none else but self. What was dependent on the mother for its whole existence, now is in full possession of his own physical and psychical capacities. The child, after his birth into the world, is a "new creature."

So it is with the origin of man. The moment he becomes capable of separate, independent, spiritual exist-

ence there is a complete change in the plane of psychical life. A new creature appears in the world, with entirely different capacities from those of the animal soul. Animal rudimentary intelligence, will and consciousness become human reason, free-will, self-consciousness. What, in animals, was spirit only as a promise, a shadow, an embryo, becomes spirit as a fulfillment, a substance, a child. The creature of God becomes a self-conscious and immortal "child" of God.

## V

Is all this consistent with Immortality as conceived by Christian conscience? Emphatically so. In evolution, thus conceived, there is place for God. God originates it; God presides over it.

Creation, in a true sense, is beyond the domain of evolution. The latter implies logically and necessarily the former. Evolution presupposes structure and function, though ever so small, to be evolved, modified, adapted. Evolution supposes the pre-existence of matter, force and motion and their laws. Something has never been known to have been produced from nothing: *Ex nihilo, nihil.*" No person or thing has ever created a grain of new matter.

Evolution asserts that all life, including man's, sprang from a blurred, undetermined feeling in some protoplasmic cell, which answered to a single nervous pulsation or shock. From this shock consciousness developed, and, next, by a number of rapid successions of such feelings and shocks, sensations were born, these sensations growing more vivid and complex until the dawn of mental life.

But this theory does not account for the creation of the first protoplasmic cell nor of the first nervous shock.

The first germ of life, the primitive bit of proto-plasm could not arise by spontaneous generation. Without the pre-existence of matter to be evolved, there is no evolution. "Give me matter and motion," said Descartes, "and I will make the world."

The world is said to have arrived at life, mind and consciousness by the play of natural forces acting on the complexities of highly developed molecular aggregates, at first life-cells, and, ultimately, brains. In the mechanism of evolution conscious life is viewed as conditioned by the physical, organic, and, more especially, nervous processes.

Still, behind and above the mechanism of evolution, there is something more important and essential, its originating and guiding principle. There is, there must be, something more than the action of physical and chemical factors. A self-conscious Power and Will, outside of, and yet immanent in, matter, must have given the first impress to the nascent universe. There has evidently been, all through the process of evolution, an infinite Power, working, by natural laws, in and through, matter, mind and spirit. There has been a directive force through it all, which has controlled and led life-forms along definite paths. There has been a divine Spirit, acting through the medium of law, but with intelligence and love behind the law. What we call "natural laws" are the mode of working of that Spirit.

All our effective movements are inspired by thought. Accordingly, we cannot help thinking that there must be some Intelligence immanent in all the processes of nature, for they are not random or purposeless, but organized and beautiful. It is God's "mens" that "agit-at molem!"

The ingenuous faith of an infant race saw in the created world the effect of a divine "command". Our

maturer science sees in it the work of divine "law" and "order".

Evolution is, thus, a process in which God is the impelling force, the controlling factor, the very heart and soul. In evolution God is everywhere and everything. There are, we are told, a thousand millions of electrons in a single atom. God is in each of these infinitesimal particles. He controls all and each of their arrangements, motions and activities.

In the vision vouchsafed to him, Jacob saw God standing on the top of the heaven-reaching ladder. In the more wonderful view of the evolution of life one sees God not only on the top, but at the bottom and on every step of the ladder. The Psalmist sees in the heavens a declaration of God's glory. The evolutionist beholds the glorious power of God reflected on everything, on the heavens above, on the earth beneath and on the water under the earth.

The giant oak-tree which erects itself to the skies and the moss and fern which we tread under our feet; the complexly structured mammal and the protozoan, invisible to the naked eye; the earth-clinging mollusk and the soaring eagle; the dog, the bee, the monkey, with their highly developed intelligence, and the coral, the sea-anemone, the jelly-fish and other similar invertebrates, whose biological features are scarcely higher than those of the plants; above all man, that unique epitome of the great world and the living image of the Godhead—all mingle their distinct voices in a triumphal chorus of praise to God's eternal Spirit.

## VI

Once we admit this first impulse and this co-operating action of God, religion has no longer reason to distrust

evolution. It is not beyond God's infinite power to evolve consciousness, spirituality and Immortality from the lower forms of life. Evolution, originated and controlled by God, can, and does, explain not only the physical, but also the psychical nature of man. God's power, evolving itself in nature, can account for Immortality, and even more.

Who will deny that this is not reconcilable with religion? If all the new powers which appear with every new form of life are but manifestations of the one, absolute, and infinite power of God, can we refuse to admit that Immortality also may be one of these powers or manifestations? If evolution is, after all, naught but the development of the Spirit in the womb of nature, dare we find it absurd that also man's soul, with its spirituality and Immortality, is subject to the universal law of that development?

A soul which, instead of being mechanically and externally infused into human organism, develops under the action of the Spirit, its own spirituality and Immortality is it necessarily less spiritual and immortal?

## VII

If this conception of the origin of man's Immortality does not detract from the intrinsic reality of that awful prerogative of his, it does not even derogate, in the least, from the greatness and infinite wisdom of the Creator.

The God of orthodox theology has to recur to distinct acts of creation. He is bound to operate several times, in order to bring about the various forms of life. In such succession of distinct creative acts the fact that every living creature, and man himself, was made out of "the dust of the ground" becomes quite meaningless. If God brings about the various life-forms by distinct

acts, why not create them "ex nihilo," instead of depending on matter?

The God of evolution creates the first life-cell and endows it with the potentiality of an infinite development. The traditional God, on the contrary, in creating matter and force, endows them with such limited potentialities that they cannot develop themselves without His further actual intervention. Which of these two conceptions makes for a greater God?

Is not the anti-evolutionary idea of creation a limitation of God's omnipotence? Does it not involve a partial and imperfect manifestation of God? The God who has to employ his creative act several times is He not less mighty than the one who acts once for all?

"If God appears periodically," says rightly Henry Drummond," he disappears periodically. If he comes upon the scene at special crises, he is absent from the scene in the intervals. Whether is all-God or occasional God, an immanent power or a casual wonder-worker, the nobler theory?

Indeed the development of a spiritual and immortal soul from matter immeasurably enhances our conception of God's greatness. Is there, in this world of ours, anything more wonderful than the tiny single-celled ovum, from which the human organism is developed? The process by which the fertilized cell develops miriads of other cells, which gradually differentiate into tissues, bones, muscles, nerves and organs; the way these organs, from their rudimentary condition, grow into that most complex of all structures, the brain; the mysterious influence that enables the new organism to reproduce not only the physical traits of the parents, but, in varying degree, their psychical characteristics:— all these

are phenomena which fill one with amazement. What tremendous potentialities were enclosed in that microscopic life-cell!

The first God-created atom, which, under the control of the Creator, develops the protoplasmic cell, and, successively, the higher forms of life up to spiritual personality, must have enclosed the promise of even greater potentialities. Think of this! The cosmical energy of the world, with its unity, variety and harmony; the organic kingdom with its striking manifestations and operations; the immortal life of the soul with its transcending light, genius, love, ideals: all this from a protoplasmic cell! The creative splendours of the mind, the restless craving of the heart for the Absolute: from a complex of physico-chemical actions and reactions! Soul from dust! Spirit from matter! Harmony from chaos! Wings from the clod! Immortality from caducity! Such a sublime reality from so vile a material! Such a glorious consummation from so humble a beginning! Truly our God is a great God! Truly the God of evolution is able out of stones to raise up children unto Abraham! Truly evolution, like the lens of a colossal telescope, enormously magnifies before our amazed and ecstatic spirit the image of the Creator!

## VIII

Evolution, thus interpreted, is becoming God not only as Power, but as Wisdom.

It is part of God's universal wisdom to employ, in the production of an effect, no more power than is strictly needed. In the language of the Schoolmen God "non deest in necessariis, non abundat in superfluis." Sobriety is one of the most conspicuous characteristics of nature, God's handmaid.

There is no useless multiplication in the laws of nature. One single law will answer for two or more cosmic and biological purposes. Thus, for instance, the universal law of gravitation has been shown by Hyatt to be the primitive morphogenetic factor in the development of animal life. Thus, again, the action of the same agents, such as gravity, electricity, light, etc., which shaped the cosmic life of the world, is the basis of all physiological phenomena, as of motion in animals. Yet again, gravity determines, to a great extent, the form of shells. Light exercises a marked influence on the growth of plants. Variations in the pressure of air, electricity and other physical agents greatly influence vegetal and animal life.

Evidently, superabundance and wastefulness are foreign to nature's workings; they must be also foreign to the nature's Lord. If matter and force, combining into chemical energies, can develop into the organic life of the plant, why should God disregard what He has already at hand, and use a greater amount of His power in a direct and independent creation of vegetal life? The same question may be asked with regard to the whole scale of life. If one life-form can be the starting-point for the evolution of a superior one, we may be quite sure that God's infinite wisdom will use and develop it.

A God who does not use the laws of nature and the qualities of matter to develop His creation, is an unwise God. Physical laws and chemical forces, which exert no influence on creation, have no reason to exist. Nothing could be more inconsistent than the conception of a God who furnishes matter with striking properties and potentialities, and then, in His work utterly disregards them.

The Scholastic "natura non facit saltus" could of no thing be truer than of the evolutive process of life. Nature and its Maker do not work by leaps. There is an harmonious correlation between the various stages of their manifestations. There is a link between one life-form and the other. The succeeding depends on the preceding; the superior presupposes the inferior.

An omnipresent and ever-active Spirit, continuously working in Nature ("And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"), and a development of life-forms by actual interventions of the Creator, acting by interrupted leaps, include a contradiction and an absurdity.

## XI

The evolutionary process of life and Immortality is, further, demanded on the ground of harmonization of apparent discrepancies.

There seems to be an inconsistency between the "Let the EARTH bring forth the living creature" (Gen. I. 24), and the "Let US make man" (Gen. I. 26). The "God CREATED man" (I. 27) seems to contradict the "And the Lord formed man OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND" (II. 7). Again. The statement in the 103rd Psalm (v. 14): "For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" seems not to be easily reconcilable with the "Ye are gods" of Psalm 82nd, (v. 6).

All these seeming discrepancies find in evolution a point of conciliation. In the light of evolutionary doctrine we understand that all these apparently contradicting statements are true, since we know that it is under the concomitant action of the Spirit that the earth brings forth the living creature. On one hand the earth alone, without the Spirit, does not produce life. On the other hand the Spirit does not, miraculously, produce

life "ex nihilo". He uses, in the production of life, all the intrinsic properties and latent potentialities of pre-existing matter.

## X

Finally evolution does not, in the least, belittle our conception of Immortality, this most divine of all the prerogatives of the soul. In evolution, rightly interpreted, man is not considered a mere complex of cells. He is, on the contrary, a product of psychic force, modeled by a creative idea. Man is born of nature, yet he belongs to a higher nature. Man comes from the earth, but he is not of the earth. He treads the earth with his feet, but he scans the heavens with his eyes. Man is dust, but a dust shadowed by the Eternal, an abject dust which reflects the magnificence of the spheres. Man is clod, but a clod fired by a divine spark. Immortality is not so much the product of matter as of the Spirit working in matter.

If God does not, in a determined moment, and by a mechanical action, infuse into man an immortal spirit, He puts in the first life-cell an awful germ, which, under His intelligent and loving control, will develop, blossom and fructify into Immortality. Can there be any conception of Immortality worthier of both God and man?

Nothing, therefore, could be more wrong than looking upon evolution as something degrading man. The first life-cell is no lower than the Biblical "dust of the earth." Is it any more degrading to hold that man was made indirectly from dust, through a long line of animal ancestors, than to believe that he was made directly from dust? Do not the dog and the monkey and the ape belong to higher orders of existence than does the clod?

So long as God is the Creative Power, what difference does it make whether out of the dust, by sudden fiat, or out of the dust by evolutive process, God brought man into being? So long as man is truly immortal what does it matter whether by direct immission, or by evolution of the lower animal soul, Immortality came to him?

What does it matter if the wonderful tree of humanity is, at the root, one with inert and lifeless physical reality, and, at its lower stem, identical with the brute, since, on its higher shoots, bloom the divine blossoms of truth, love and beauty? What does it matter if the process begins with an amorphous and chaotic substance, if it issues in the soul of a Paul of Tarsus, an Augustine of Hippo, a Francis of Assisi? The fact that man had to go through the state of the monstrous pterodactyls is it, can it be, of importance, when his ascension had its climax in the genius of a Dante, a Da Vinci, a Michelangelo, a Shakespeare, a Beethoven, a Goethe, a Leopardi?

Evolution, by going farther beyond the sudden framing of man out of the Biblical dust of the earth, and tracing his origin to the very first nebulous matter, entrusts the sublime work of preparing the birth of man's immortal spirit to millions of centuries, to all the forces of nature, to a most bewildering complex of actions and reactions on the part of myriads of living beings. Thus man becomes the central point of the universe, the apex of creation. He appears as the splendid result of the lengthy co-operation of earth and heaven. He is the precious gold, marvellously elaborated and refined, throughout immeasurable aeons, in the fire of Life. He is the flower of the life of the world. He is a divine microcosm.

## XI

More than this, Evolution promises to our species, in the name of the same law which formed it out of primeval matter, an endless ascension toward the Infinite.

St. Paul saw human creatures perpetually moving toward higher and higher planes of perfection, liberty and glory:" but we are all changed into the same image from glory into glory" (II. Cor. ch. 3. v. 18). The sublime Pauline vision finds its fulfillment in evolution. In no better way could, perhaps, evolution be defined than by stating that it is the gradual realization of spiritual personality.

Indeed, the whole process of physical and psychical world, from the nebular and steamy matter of the primeval stage up through the uni-cellular organisms, through invertebrate and saurian and bird and mammal to man is the ascent of life towards higher, more creative and spiritual personality.

There was no trace of the nervous system in the lowest organisms. Then came simple nervous ganglia and fibres, with corresponding simple feeling. Then appeared a central brain-mass, whose more complex reactions were indicative of dawning perception. Then came into existence the marvelously active brain of man, which reacted to the stimuli of the environment and became the instrument of creative imagination, thought and moral feeling. Thus spiritual personality appears as the sweet flower of a lengthy germination.

The phenomenon of physical death does not, cannot, arrest the march of creative and spiritual life. Death is but a critical phase in the steady progress of the spirit. The spiritual values inherent in man survive physical disintegration. Human personality goes on,

realizing its potencies more completely, living its life more fully.

Thus from cosmic matter comes the natural or physical man; the physical man grows into the meta-physical or supernatural man. Primordial elements, physical order, organic life, spiritual and immortal personality—what a wonderful sequence! From the electron to the soul of man—what an awful drama!

The star-dust was not the terminus of the electron. In the stupendous order of creative ascent the complex atomic energies were the stage of the higher vital energies. Actual man, accordingly, cannot exhaust his potentialities, nor does he fully realize his evolutive powers, here on earth.

Man has the promise of further advance, newer enrichments, more sublime perfectibility. The poet, the artist, the hero are not the last step in man's evolution. Actual spiritual energies must be the starting-point for the ascent toward unimaginably higher and more harmonious forms of life. From man shall come the "super-man", the spiritual man, resulting from the union of the individual spirit with the Spirit of the Whole. The human being shall grow into the divinized being: "ye are gods" (Ps. 82, v. 6). In the light of evolution the actual man appears, therefore, as the raw material of the man that is to be.

That marvelous process which began with the primordial germ, is still going on, on the spiritual plane. It will continue to function as long as, in the language of St. John, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Spiritual evolution is bound to continue, until the time shall come when, as St. Paul puts it, "that which is in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect is to come."

The transformation of the natural and earthly man into the supernatural and heavenly man: here is the stupendous climax of evolution!

“And so it is written: the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit” (I. Cor. XV. 45).

*Where is one that, born of woman, altogether can escape  
From the lower world within him, moods of tiger or of ape?  
Man as yet is being made, and ere the crowning Ages of ages,  
Shall not aeon after aeon pass and touch him into shape?*

*All about him shadow still, but, while the races flower and fade,  
Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining on the shade,  
Till the peoples all are one, and all their voices blend in choric  
Hallelujah to the Maker. “It is finished. Man is made.”*

## CHAPTER II

### BODY, SPIRIT AND IMMORTALITY

*"The death of the body may indeed be the end of the sensational use of our mind, but only the beginning of the intellectual use." E. Kant.*

#### I

Among the structural elements of human organism the nervous system is doubtless the most important. The centre of the nervous system is the brain. The tissues, of which it is made, have the property of "irritability" or sensitiveness to external influences. Their function is to mediate between the outer world and the inner, and to convey to the muscles and other organs "motor" impulses, so as to bring about movements harmonious and advantageous to the organism.

The brain is thus the mysterious "medium" between the physical world and the psychical. It is the organ or instrument of the mind. It is here that the material activities, underlying consciousness, intellect, emotions and will, take place. Whatever functions are carried on by the rest of the nervous system enter into consciousness only through the brain. It is only by means of the brain that the stimulations of sensory nerves result in a consciousness of the stimulations ("sensation"), and the knowledge of, and control over, the resulting motion.

The brain would seem to be essential to any conscious elaboration. All the so-called higher mental activities, thought and will, seem entirely dependent upon it. Destroy the "sensory-motor area" of the "cere-

brum", injure its frontal lobes: you destroy, at the same time, the conscious apprehension of sound, vision, smell, etc. By making sensation impossible, you do away with the possibility of intellectual activity. The latter depends on the former.

The labours of prominent physiologists, among whom Golgi, His, Kolliker, Gehuchten, Forel, Cajal, Retzius, Ferrier, Lenhossek, Flourens, Wegent, Nissl, Erlich, etc. have given us an insight into the structure of the nervous system. The "neuron" theory is now the generally accepted one. Its champions tell us that the structural element of the nervous tissues is the neuron, made up of a "nerve-cell" and its branches.

The cell-body consists of a mass of proto-plasm, containing as a nucleus, the nerve-cell. The cell-body is the birth or genetic centre of the neuron.

But the physiological significance of the different parts of the neuron seems to escape human analysis. Our ideas are based largely on theoretical grounds. Thus the result of the patient analysis of the brain is analogous to that of nature and life as a whole. Man is able to notice and examine the "phenomenon"; but he is helpless with regard to the underlying "noumenon". Ultimate reality is incomprehensible.

## II

However the brain, no matter how wonderful a physiological reality it is, and may prove to be through further investigation, cannot be a producer of thought.

The agnostic argument that we, not knowing all the powers of the brain, cannot exclude the possibility of its being the productive cause of reasoning intelligence, is pseudo-scientific. Granting that we do not know all the brain can do, yet we do know what it cannot do.

The great logical principle: "operari sequitur esse" applies also to the relation of thought to the brain. If thought transcends, in its essence, the brain, the former cannot be an adequate effect of the latter.

Does reasoning intelligence transcend the brain? Emphatically so. The transcendence is as infinitely great as that of Spirit over matter. The brain is a mass of tissues, a molecular aggregate, a bit of matter with all its properties of extension, volume, weight, etc. Thought is an intrinsically immaterial and spiritual reality.

True, thought depends on the brain for its existence, yet the nature and attributes of the former exceed the essential properties of the latter. The power of knowledge, reflexion, and, above all, self-consciousness, possessed by the soul, is intrinsically immaterial. It cannot be an attribute of extended substance.

Again, the brain is a physiological organ. Its functions are limited to perceptions and sensations. Thought, on the contrary, is an act of the psyche, and, consequently, a real fact of deep psychological significance. The brain's activities are limited by the physical world. Mind's power of abstraction, by which man makes broad generalizations, formulates conceptions of cause, effect, time, space, etc., and sees concrete individual objects in their ideal relations, is essentially metaphysical. The dependence of that metaphysical power on the physical reality cannot destroy its transcendental character.

Thus it is safe to conclude that the brain can no more be the producer of thought than matter of spirit. In this infinite universe of ours, constituted, as spectral analysis shows, of essentially the same substance, there is no trace of a single astronomical body that has produced a reasoning intelligence.

Moreover mind studies matter and analyzes the brain itself. It is, therefore, greater than matter and the brain. Surely a mind, whose light penetrates the mysterious recesses of the brain, and endeavors to understand its structure and functions, must be greater than the object of its knowledge.

The brain, in spite of its latent physiological powers and its essential relationship to psychological reality, cannot generate reason and personality. Though we can act on the external world only through our muscles, yet in ourselves we are aware that such things as thought, will, consciousness, responsibility, purpose, love etc., belong to a totally different category, with which our organs and their tissues appear to have nothing to do.

Our mental faculties and activities seem intimately associated with our bodily mechanism and are displayed through it; but, in themselves, they belong to a different order of being, an order which employs and dominates the material, while immersed, or immanent, in it.

### III

The transcendency of thought over the brain, and of the soul over the body, is further testified by the triple fact that man distinguishes himself from his body; he is conscious of personal identity throughout the bodily changes, and, in the exercises of his will, he is not controlled by, but rather controls, the body.

That man distinguishes himself from his body is a psychological experience so obvious and universal as to hardly need demonstration. Christ once affirmed that the body is more than raiment, and the life more than meat. (St. Matt. VI. 28). Likewise man feels that his individuality, his "ego", is more than his bodily organism. The Christian martyr who says to the pagan emperor:

"You can kill my body, but not my soul" knows that he is something more than muscles, bones and nerves. The apostle of science, social progress and moral perfection, who sacrifices the exigencies of his bodily and material life to the triumph of his ideal, knows that he is superior to mere living and organized substance. Every one of those millions of allied soldiers, who, during the World War, exposed themselves to death and destruction, so that justice, freedom and democracy might not perish for ever, knew that his personality, which moved the body and inspired it with the heroism of self-sacrifice, was something greater than the body itself. His conscious sacrifice was a solemn witness to the reality of Spirit and its transcendence over matter.

#### IV

Also the personal identity of man belongs to the category of universal psychological experience.

Science teaches us that the molecular aggregates of bodily organism are undergoing a continuous process of transformation and renewal, with the result that, after a certain period of time, there is, in man, hardly anything left of the material substance of the previous stages of life. Many times, in the course of life, the entire body is worn off and recreated. Dead tissues and cells are replaced by new tissues and cells. A veritable Egyptian Phoenix, man's body repeatedly dies and rises from its own ashes.

Yet, in spite of all this ceaseless changing, there is, in man, something that does not change. In spite of the subjection of his organism to succession, plurality and diversity of experience, there persists in him a psychological unity. Man is aware of an intrinsic self-sameness and identity.

This personal identity, which is the very basis of consciousness, has a deep spiritual significance. It means that the principle which, through changes, does not change, possesses a character of absoluteness. This amounts to saying that man partakes of the infinite reality, and that the destiny of the soul is not unconditionally bound to that of the body. If personality can withstand all the changes and shocks of life, it is not absurd to think that it can also survive the more radical change and greater shock of death. If the central self of man is not affected by the ceaseless flux and reflux of the external organism, and, through the steady flowing away of the body, retains the fulness of its essence and powers, it is reasonable to argue that, in death, it can entirely and finally disengage itself from the flesh, without ceasing to be and to live. If more than once, in this life, the psyche of man can put off its worn body and put on a new flesh, it must be able to clothe itself in a new after-death garment, adapted to its new condition.

## V

Further that man's will is not controlled by the body is easily demonstrable on the same ground of psychological experience.

It is, of course, out of our scope to expound and analyze the theory of volition, its genesis, its progress, its characteristics of freedom, the psycho-physical interdependence, and other deep metaphysical questions. We are only to notice that, since volition depends on intellection ("nihil volitum quin praecognitum"), and intellection, in its turn, depends on sensation ("nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu") there is,

consequently, an essential relation between will, mind and the bodily senses.

Will, however, is not a faculty distinct from the mind. It is, rather, that function of the mind which manifests itself in action. It is the active side of man's consciousness.

As the phenomenon of intellection, though depending, in its genesis, on the material world of sensation, yet, as a result of its going through psychical elaboration, becomes a purely spiritual affair, so volition, influenced, as it is, by physical factors, undergoes such a psychological process that it becomes, in its ultimate reality, a pure act of the soul.

In the complex process of volition one of the surest things is this: man is essentially independent of external influences. Volition includes fundamentally a "choice", which would be impossible if man were not in a relation of independence and autonomy to the alternatives which appeal to him.

Man is conscious that, behind the more or less strong appeals of the various, and often, conflicting, motives, he is weighing these motives, and coming to a decision upon their relative value to him. In brief, man knows that he is not the controlled, but the controller.

The whole history of the moral and social progress of the world is based upon this controlling power of man, in the active field of mind. The exterior world and the senses may influence and entice him; yet the sway, the control, the mastery of his own actions remain, after all, with him. Often the flesh will resist the spiritual dictates; yet man can find in himself the power to subject it. The spiritual perfection of mankind is the result of a great and heroic effort to subordinate matter to spirit, the body to the soul, the world to God.

The whole of which tends to demonstrate that the relation of the material organism to mental and spiritual life is not absolute. Man's personality is an intrinsically spiritual principle, which depends only accidentally on the body. The spiritual function of personality is not necessarily bound to cease with the disintegration of its material involucrum.

## VI

Nothing could be more erroneous than to hold that the brain is the effective cause of thought.

In order to be justified in asserting that the brain is a producer of thought, one ought to demonstrate that the former controls and dominates the latter in such a way that abstraction, idealization and genius are physiological processes. This cannot be proved. We are, therefore, right in maintaining that as life-cells are not the very essence of life, so brain-cells do not constitute the reality of mind.

Thought is only a "transmittive" function of the brain. The fact that the brain transmits thought does not include that it produces thought. An "instrumental" cause is something different from an "efficient" cause.

Thought does need the brain for its organ of expression; yet this need is not so absolute as to exclude the possibility of a state in which the former may be no longer so dependent on the latter. "When", William James beautifully says, "the physiologist pronounces the phrase: Thought is a function of the brain: he thinks of the matter just as he thinks when he says: Steam is a function of the teakettle."

Again. The brain is only a "condition" of thought. The term "condition" excludes absoluteness of relation. The brain modifies, limits the existence and character

of thought, yet it is not the constitutive principle of its reality. Therefore it is "actually", but not "absolutely" impossible to think without the brain.

The brain is to thinking what the house is to seeing. To use M' Taggart's similitude:" If a man is shut up in a house, the transparency of the windows is an essential condition of his seeing the sky. But it would not be prudent to infer that, if he walked out of the house, he could not see the sky, because there was no longer any glass through which he might see."

The brain's material is, consequently, the "normal", but not the "exclusive" medium through which mental activity can express itself. It is not absurd to conceive that mind, and spirit may operate without an intermediary physical process. Individuality is essentially dependent upon the brain for physical manifestation, but only accidentally for psychical existence.

## VII

That the connection of man's spiritual element with the material is not absolute is also evidenced by the fact that the relation between the organism and mental life is far from being uniform. The "mens sana in corpore sano" seems to be not peremptorily true. Recent investigations by specialists in physio-psychology tend to show that in certain cases of intellectual insanity (apparently based on false perception) there was no error of the sensorial process, central or peripheral.

There are facts that show the independence of man's mind, operating with great clearness, precision and strength even in wholly abnormal physical conditions. It has been discovered, for instance, that there are very close relations between genius and neuropathy. Distinguished psychiatrists, among whom are the Italian

Morselli and Colella, affirm that Caesar, Lucretius, Mohammed, Tasso, Napoleon, Byron, Lenau, Victor Hugo and Leopardi were, more or less, affected in their nervous system. Some of them were epileptics, such being the case of Victor Hugo, who wrote several of his most splendid pages after strong epileptic paroxysms.

The most significant phenomenon, in this connection, is presented by Giacomo Leopardi, doubtless the greatest lyricist of modern times. Dante's powerful "synthesis" and Leopardi's clear "intuition" have not yet been surpassed by any other giant of the realm of letters.

Yet this inexhaustible reservoir of mental power, this miracle of genius which we call "Leopardi" is found embodied in a most delicate and frail natural constitution. Leopardi's physique was early impaired by an incurable visceral and nervous infirmity. Gradually intense study, want of love, loss of hopes, gloomy melancholy and cruel pessimism so hopelessly shattered that sickly organism that Leopardi lost the use of some of his senses and became, as he himself says: "a trunk that feels and suffers."

However the physical torments of the body and the unique martyrdom of the soul, far from impairing Leopardi's mental energy, seemed rather to heighten it. His depth of feeling, his clearness of ideas, his directness of expression, in brief, the vitality of his genius grew in proportion to the increasing abnormality of his physical condition. It was when a "physical wreck" that he wrote some on his "Canzoni" with which neither the literature of Greece and Rome, nor that of modern Europe, has anything to compare.

How to explain all this? One might answer that the general pathological condition of Leopardi's organism did not affect the centre of his nervous system. But such supposition strikes one as being highly improbable.

## VIII

The doctrine that mental life can exist independently of a body is strengthened by an experience of ordinary life.

It is a fact that our life exhibits to us a constant waning of the lower faculties of mere sense-perception, of mere mechanical memory and of fancy, with a corresponding increase of the higher faculty of reasoning intelligence. Hence the lower activities may be said to perish in proportion as the higher activities are on the increase.

The child depends, almost exclusively, on the world of sensations; but, as he grows, physically and intellectually, his dependence on the exterior world decreases more and more, while the spiritual faculties of abstraction, generalization, interior reflection become supreme.

Mechanical memory weakens in proportion to the increase of the dialectic power of reasoning. A young boy memorizes much more quickly than the student of maturer age. In the latter the susceptibility and readiness of the earlier period give place to retentiveness.

Again, the educated man, the thinker, depends on the exterior world much less than the uncultured and ignorant. The former is able to create to himself an inner world, in which to live. The controlling factor in his mental activities is not immediate sense-perception, but the idea and the associations of ideas.

## IX

This waning of the sensible world, proportionate to the intensifying of the intellectual, is testified by the phenomenon called "genius".

Never does man live a more intense intellectual life than when he is under the inspiration of genius. He

has then a more direct and immediate intuition of the true and the beautiful.

Dante tells us that his Beatrice is not a product of nature and a reality belonging to the sensible world. She is, rather, an "intellectual light, full of love."

Leonardo da Vinci, the most universal mind the world has ever produced, divined the principle that art is "creation" rather than pure "imitation" of nature.

The divine Michelangelo, the most genuine spiritual heir of Dante, wrote, in one of his letters, that one paints "with the brain," and not with the eyes and hands alone.

These principles, applied to practice, created those artistic masterpieces, before which one almost hesitates to believe that they are the works of men.

Musical genius confirms the fact that the highest creations of genius are emanations of beings living the minimum of the sensible world and the maximum of the ultra-sensible. If the world does not possess, in the realm of sounds, anything diviner than Beethoven's Symphonies, it is due to the fact that the musician of Bonn is, par excellence, the artist of the interior and spiritual reality. His music aims at incarnating and expressing the idea.

His tendency to liberate himself from matter grows stronger as deafness detaches him, more and more, from the outward world. This aspiration to immaterial reality, this struggle of genius to compel matter to obedience, borders, in some of his latest compositions, on morbidity. Then Beethoven, through gigantic struggles and tragic contrasts, reaches absolute and immaterial contemplation, wherein cares and anxieties become silent, and the feeling of supreme reconciliation sweetens life.

Thus genius makes it clear that man's life grows

more intense and higher when he depends less on material world, that he is more "himself" when he is less the exterior reality.

## X

This leads us to ask a question. That gradual waning of the lower faculties in man, proportionate to the intensification of his higher activities, could it not reach, by death, the point of total extinction without necessarily destroying, or impairing, the reality of man's personality? Could not the soul, through the disintegration of the human organism, lose completely sensible perception, fancy, mechanical memory, and still keep the fullness of its consciousness? Could not, in a world to come, man's personality connect itself with the past and be aware of its own identity?

If the "self" of man, the less it depends on the senses, the more it is "himself", would it not be infinitely heightened by a total and absolute independence on sense-perception? If dependence on the bodily organism makes life more limited and fragmentary, would not independence from matter make it fuller and more absolute? If our ethical and spiritual life is more real when we silence the exigencies of sensual life, and almost annihilate the material world, shall we affirm that will, after bodily disintegration, is unable to exercise its activity?

## XI

This is not all. There is a mass of psychical phenomena, which the laws of nature, actually known, are unable to explain. The scientists, baffled by these facts, are compelled either to admit the existence of a spirit-world, or to find refuge in agnosticism.

One of these phenomena is telepathy, or the transference of thought from one mind to another, without visible means by which the act of transferring is accomplished. In the undeveloped power of telepathy we have an indication of a mode of mental and spiritual intercourse apparently not dependent on the machinery of physical processes.

The range of telepathic activity is so wide as to include not only thought-transference, but many other phenomena which appear to us very strange and almost miraculous. It has been ascertained, for instance, that one can, by exerting one's will to that effect, cause one's self to appear present to a person at a distance.

Much of the evidence for this and analogous phenomena (attested in the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research") is fragmentary; but the mass of telepathic facts is decidedly imposing. All the experiments, taken in the aggregate, appear to make it unreasonable to doubt any longer the existence, in man, of a psychical principle, which can act independently of the ordinarily recognized channels of sense.

Telepathy, and so also "clairvoyance", point strongly to the existence of a psychical activity which depends very little, if at all, on the physical, transcends the body, and is, consequently, capable of surviving it. This psychical activity is unable to work, directly, on the physical world; but it can, and must be, the contrary, in its own metaphysical sphere.

Telepathy is not the only stage on the road to scientific proof. There is a mass of physiological, psychical and pathological facts which point to the actual persistence of personality apart from a bodily vehicle. True, spirit-

ualistic facts are not generally known and not universally accepted as yet. Their theory is still in a rudimentary stage. Professional fraud has discredited them considerably. Yet, there is something, in them, that has all the appearance of being true.

One cannot reasonably and conscientiously reject an evidence which is vouched by such scientists as the English Crookes, Myers, Lodge, Barret, Ruskin, Wallace, Conan Doyle, the French Flourcroy, Richet, Bergson, Janet, Flammarion, Maxwel, Geley, the Italian Lombroso, Morselli, Schiapparelli, Lapponi, the American Hare, James, Sargent, the Russian Atsakoff, etc.

The testimony of these naturalists, psychologists and anthropologists, based on the most scrupulous scientific investigations, affords to us evidence of psychical entities, constructing a temporary organ of materialization, and making attempts at manifestation through the same. There is a mass of unquestionable scientific witness to the actual communication between the dead and the living.

Other arguments from what is called "automatism", from "subliminal faculty", and mental pathology in general seem also to point to the fact that psychical reality is distinguished from the physical, and that, under certain conditions, the former can absorb the latter to the extent of being almost able to act without it.

Cesare Lombroso, the great Italian founder of modern criminal anthropology, wrote thus: "I have made it the most tenacious occupation of my life to prove that all force is a property of matter, and the soul an emanation of the brain." Yet, in a posthumous work of his, the eminent scientist affirmed, to the great scandal of the materialistic school: "There are psychical phenomena which find no explanation in science." (See: "Nuova Antologia". July, 1922).

## XIII

These recent discoveries, in the realm of psychical science, have an enormous significance. They are the scientific affirmation of the spirit-world, taught by religion. They have confirmed Descartes' emphatic statement that the existence of a spiritual principle, distinct from the body, is more certain than the existence of the body itself.

Psychical discoveries teach us that the Spirit, which, in the beginning, created and shaped matter, still controls it. They emphasize the fact that present life waits for its completion in the life of the world to come. They tell us that growth in spirituality is the inevitable road which each soul is destined to follow.

Thus, if natural science has discovered the unity and identity of substance, the unity of force and the unity of origin, psychical science has made the greater discovery of the unity of life in the One Supreme Mind and Spirit.

This indestructible spiritual unity and identity of life is the equivalent of Immortality.

*Just in the farther bound of sense  
Unproved by outward evidence,  
But known by a deep influence  
Which through our grosser clay doth shine  
With light unwaning and divine,  
Beyond where highest thought can fly,  
Stretched the world of Mystery,  
And they not greatly overween  
Who deem that nothing true hath been  
Save the unspeakable Unseen.*

## CHAPTER III

### SPIRITUAL TRANSCENDENCE OF THE SOUL

#### I

Before passing to our fundamental proof of Immortality, it is necessary to emphasize the spiritual transcendence of the human soul. This transcendence has been the direct mark for all the objections advanced against Immortality by materialistic science. Clearing the ground from adverse arguments, and affirming the intrinsic spirituality of the soul will be, as it were, laying deeper foundations for the constructive reason of the proof.

Death has been defined as a breaking of the constitutive elements of a substance, and a disintegration of parts. Evidently death, as such, can affect man as an essential compound of body and soul, but not the soul itself. The soul is an immaterial entity, a spirit. It cannot be subject to alteration or disintegration.

What is a spirit? We do not know what it is; but we do know what it is not. We know that we cannot think of it in terms of matter. Inertia, size, shape, elasticity, weight, volume and other attributes of matter are foreign to the spirit.

We are unable to conceive the simplest component of matter, i. e. the molecule, or the hydrogenic atom, or the radio-active electron, without relating them to mass and weight. The soul on the contrary, is a real, simple, and unitary being, sharply opposed to material substance as thought is opposed to extension. The soul does not

move between limits. It is, rather than a substance, an active principle or an activity.

We do not know things by their "noumena" or hidden essence. We know them only by their "phenomena" or external manifestations. The philosophical axiom: "operari sequitur esse" is as evident as the mathematical truth that one plus one makes two.

This incontrovertible principle that the actions of a being are specifically consentaneous and proportionate to its nature, applies to all forms of life, including the very highest ones. Tell us what the phenomena of the soul are, and we will tell you what the soul is.

The soul's most characteristic operations are reason and free will; these are intrinsically spiritual manifestations; the soul is, consequently, an essentially spiritual reality.

Reasoning is an inalienable attribute of man. It is something as natural and necessary to him as air, food and motion. Man, in the most primitive and savage state, lives by a rudimentary process of thought. The child, as soon as his organism has reached a certain degree of development, shows that he is a thinking being. An irresistible, instinctive power leads him to touch, feel, and learn the names of things. With the years, his mind grows more and more independent of concrete objects, shows more general aptitude, engages itself in more spiritual processes, while it becomes the master of the external world and the controlling principle of life.

## II

To consider the functions of mind, to analyze the prerogatives of thought, is to assert spirituality for each one of them.

First of all, thought possesses the power of abstraction. In the visible world we find individual, concrete beings and modes. We see man, but none has ever seen "humanity." We meet a good man, but none has ever seen "goodness."

What the eyes do not see, mind does see. Mind, by putting together the various acts of goodness which are seen in men, and comparing them, perceives goodness in its general essence. Mind conceives the reality that is common to the various objects, and forms the transcendental notion of the same. Goodness, as seen by mind, is no longer the moral quality of this or that man. It is the transcending goodness of all men. It is the ideal form of goodness. Mind has divested goodness from all that was concrete, individuating, fragmentary.

Again. Objects strike man with their "accidents", that is, their contingent qualities and properties. Mind, on the contrary, conceives the "attributes" of things, that is what is necessarily and absolutely inherent in them. Thus, for instance, the immensity of the ocean will strike our eyes and imagination; yet mind realizes that quantity or volume is only an accident of the water, since one drop of it possesses the essential attributes of the whole mass.

Yet again. The natural world presents to us the "phenomenon" or the fact, in a concrete and unrelated mode of existence. We do not find, in the objective world, such things as cause, effect, instrumentality, affinity, analogy, finality, etc. All these notions are the result of the work of mind, which strives to comprehend the "noumenon", or deeper reality, underlying the external manifestations. Natural reality exists as partial; mind conceives it as a total, or final, fact.

Mind, by comparing distinct beings, modes and facts

to each other, and discovering in them analogies, gives us classifications and categories.

Through careful observation of phenomena, mind is able to catch what is regular, normal, in the operations and workings of beings, and, indeed, of the whole universe. The result is the formulation of laws. In brief, mind searches the absolute.

### III

This process, by which mind abstracts from the concrete, conceives ideas and notions, perceives relations and formulates laws, is essentially spiritual. Mind spiritualizes the material and concrete reality of the natural world. It is like the sun, which, in the glory of its midday's rays, absorbs the cloud, invests it with its splendours and transforms it into light.

True, the process of assimilation, by which the physical object becomes idea, is, at the beginning, a material one; yet, at the end, reveals itself as intrinsically spiritual. The external world "impresses" our senses, but mind, by a physio-psychical reconstruction of the "perception", forms, or creates, the purely spiritual "idea".

What is even more striking, mind can reproduce, with a more or less adequate image, objects not actually present to the senses. Thousands of miles may separate us from our parents, our native country and town, all the dearest objects associated with our youth; yet we can, in a moment, revive them in our mind, see them present to us in their real characteristics and ideal relations, feel almost their loving breath and mighty charm. Thousands of years have run between us and the ancient Oriental, Greek and Roman worlds; yet which of us has not seen, with his imagination, the Egyptians building the Pyramids, and turning the Nile into a grand

canal? Who has not fancifully witnessed the heroic Greeks of the Thermopilae and heard the immortal song of Simonides? Who has not, while studying Roman history, spiritually visualized the Caesars moving, with their legions, to the conquest of the world, and exalted himself before the heroic figures and deeds of the Gracchi, of Cato, the Scipios, and of Cicero?

All this cannot be the exclusive work of animal fancy and mechanical memory, since we revive ancient civilizations, not only as a mere series of concrete facts, but as an ideal historical reality, with all its political, social, intellectual, moral, religious and spiritual relations. It is the result of the higher activity of intellectual imagination and memory.

Furthermore, thought can elaborate a "complex" idea, which may not have any corresponding physical object, though its particular constituent elements may severally be the reproductions of actual perceptions. The idea of a "centaur" is a complex mental picture, composed of the objective ideas of man and horse.

Thus the mental faculty of abstraction, which makes broad generalizations, formulates conceptions of time, space, cause, analogy, finality, etc., and states accurately and profoundly the laws of nature shows itself to be highly metaphysical. Before the divine power of mind we fully realize that man was truly made in the image of the All-Spirit God!

#### IV

This, however, does not exhaust mind's resourcefulness. Human intelligence is a creative faculty. Creativeness is indeed the characteristic of thought.

James Harvey Robinson, in his: "Mind in the making" (Harper, 1922) suggests that we substitute for the word

“reason” that of “creative thought”. For, he says, mental meditation begets knowledge and “knowledge is really creative, inasmuch as it makes things look different from what they seemed before.”

According to this illustrious American thinker the Greeks, the Medievalists, and, above all, the naturalists of the 16th and 17th century were the champions of a creative movement, which was continued by modern philosophers and scientists.

Mind’s creative power is conspicuously seen in what we call “genius”. Nature, even at its best, cannot explain the transcending manifestations of genius. This glowing intuition, on the part of few, of the inner reality is the spark of a spiritual fire burning within man. There is a divinity within us; when it is blown into flame man’s mind is exalted to heights of creativeness. “Est Deus in nobis; agitante calescimus illo.” (Ovid. *Fasts*: VI. 5).

Behold how, man, under the mighty impulse and fiery light of inspiration, becomes a creator! Behold how he gives life to what does not exist in nature! Such creatures as Dante’s Beatrice, Petrarca’s Laura and the nameless woman of whom Leopardi sings in his immortal canzone “Alla sua donna” are, indeed, creations of beings who do not exist in this world of imperfection.

Beatrice is essentially, as the poet says:  
 “Intellectual light, full of love”

What about Leopardi’s “donna”? Does she not transcend all human experience? The poet himself is aware of this, when he pathetically sings: “But there is no thing on earth that resembles thee.” With a deeper philosophical accent, in the last strophe, he asks her whether or not she is: “one of the eternal ideas.”

Art, no less than literature, proclaims highly mind’s

creative power. Some of Raffaello's Madonnas, Da Vinci's Cenacle, and Michelangelo's Moses can be designated by no other name than creations. They are materializations of visions of eternal beauty, vouchsafed to the artists. They are spiritual emanations of the artists' souls. Do not expect to see them in nature. They are representations of something immanent, and yet transcending nature, the divine.

Cast your eye on Raffaello's works. The 16th century was essentially a worldly and pagan age; yet the creative power of that great Italian genius gave us the "Madonna del Granduca," which, in the purity of the forehead, the sweetness of the look and in the whole figure, humble and radiating, reveals something that is not of the earth, the perfume of Christian virginity. Our wonder increases at the contemplation of the "Madonna di San Sisto". Before it, we feel, with Dante, that the virgin-mother is

"Humble and high beyond all other creature."

It is, as Viardot affirmed, "a revelation of heaven to the earth."

As for Da Vinci's Cenacle no natural scene or situation could have furnished the subject-matter for it. It is a group truer than truth itself. While the apostles, gathered around the Saviour, are movable as waves, Christ, in the centre, is as immovable as eternity. No human voice could possibly say, more eloquently, what the Saviour's eyes and lips utter. You can feel the ineffable anguish, tempered by divine Charity and resignation, of the pathetic words: "One of you shall betray me."

The contrast between the serene, luminous goodness of Christ and the satanic maliciousness of Judas is a miracle. Judas' head is a veritable portrait of betrayal

and inhumanity. It seems as if all the betrayals, which have darkened the history of men, are concentrated on that head.

What about the Moses? Phidias might, perhaps, have seen, in nature, his "Jupiter"; but Michelangelo, the spiritual heir of Dante and the follower of Savonarola, could not have found, on earth, a prototype for his Moses. It is something greater than the world itself. It is a living and palpitating Colossus. Before it we feel, with Taine, that "should it get up, the world would ruin."

## V

The realm of sounds affirms, even more strongly, mind's creativeness. Which of us, listening to one of Beethoven's Symphonies, has not realized, somehow, that only a creator could have conceived so deep, sublime, transcending harmonies?

The artist has, perhaps, stood long hours, in meditation and rapture, in the midst of canorous woods, or facing majestic mountain ranges, or wandering over the dreamy immensity of the sea. During clear and dewy spring dawns he has been absorbing, perchance, the eternal and invigorating youthfulness of nature. The golden glows of autumn sunsets, glorified by the dying songs of the winged creatures, may have thrown him into waves of tender emotion. The midsummer starry nights, with their softly diffused light, the murmur of the brooks, the rustling of the foliage, the buzzing of insects, and a thousand other indistinct voices have, most likely, lulled him by the sweet rhythm of their poetry.

Yet, there is, in Beethoven's Symphonies, something that is greater, more touching, more thrilling than all the combined voices of nature. The artist has been

sounding the bottomless depths of another world. He has been listening to the voices that sound, mysteriously, across the luminous horizons of the world-soul.

The various, contrasting echoes which the external world has sent to the artist, have been, by him, elaborated, perfected, idealized. As the ore has acquired its finish and splendour in the fire, even so the music, which nature conveyed to his hearing, has passed through the inflamed soul of the artist, to attain its universal, emotional and spiritual appeal. He has plunged the harmonies of the outer world into those of the inner world. He has bathed the sensations, which external objects have produced in his consciousness, in the light and beauty of spirit-reality. What has come out is something that ears had never heard before.

With Beethoven music is no longer one of the arts. It becomes the universal art. It learns how to express the most intimate and indefinable sensations, thoughts and longings. It clothes with harmony all that which mind conceives and the soul feels, yet the mouth does not how to utter by words.

Recall the riotous, intoxicating, bacchic gaiety of the IX Symphony's scherzo. Think of the serene contemplation of, and luminous, ethereal aspiration to, the ideal, as expressed in the adagio. Reawaken the finale's divine joyfulness, signifying the supreme reconciliation of life's contrasting elements. Is not all that a creation?

## VI

Man's transcending genius is revealed also in science. Nature presents only facts; mind, by analyzing and correlating them, conceives universal laws, states doctrines, formulates systems.

Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and their planetary laws;

Huygens, Herschell, Laplace and their celestial mechanics; Newton and his universal gravitation; Linnaeus and his classification of plants; Buffon and his description of natural history; Haüy and his fundamental principles of mineralogy; Harvey, Malpighi, Jenner, Flourens, Bernard, Bichat, Galvani, Mesmer, Von Baer, Agassiz, Pasteur, Virchow and their revelations in the anatomical, physiological and biological field; Davy, Lavoisier, Leibig, Chevreul, Berthollet, Chaptal, Becquerel and their chemical and electro-chemical discoveries and applications; Volta, Ampère, Arago, Faraday, Papin, Weber, Maxwell, Helmholtz, Fresnell, Thomson, Ruhmkoff, Siemens, Deprez and their findings in connection with the various branches of physics; Cuvier, Lyell and their principles of paleontology and geology; Humboldt and Sausurre and their meteorologic and climatologic observations; Lamarck, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Haeckel and their great formulation of biological law; Rumford and his theory of the correlation of forces; Wolff and his embryological doctrine; Dalton and his atomic theory; Hertz and his sonorous waves; Schwann and his cell-theory: what a great and sublime scientific epopee!

Mind not only discovers the forces of nature, but conquers and subdues them, by putting them to the service of civilization. Roger Bacon and his gunpowder Guttenberg and his printing press, Galileo and his telescope and pendulum, Torricelli and his barometer, Boyle and his pneumatic machine, Watt and Stephenson and their locomotive. Volta and his electric pile, Franklin and his lightning rod, Montgolfier and Guy Lussac and their air-balloon, Watt and his illuminating gas, Fulton and his steamship, Niepce and Daguerre and their photography, Bushnell and his submarine, Morse and his telegraph, Thomson and his submarine cable, Siemens and his dynamo, Graham Bell and his telephone, Kirch-

hoff and Bunsen and their spectroscope, Edison and his electric lamp and phonograph, Röntgen and his X-rays, Lumière and his cinema, Currie and the radium, Wright and the aeroplane, Marconi and the wireless telegraph, the present increasing wonders of the radio, all the modern hydraulic, steam and electric machines, whose complicatedness and mechanical perfection stupefy: what a glorious hymn to the inexhaustible inventiveness of man's genius!

Time's relentless power cancels the most profound traces of civilization. In its ceaseless march it sows ruin and destruction; yet Lübböck, Winckelmann, Neibhur, Mommsen, Ramsay, Lanciani, Champollion, Bunsen, Mariette, Curtius, Schlieman, Max Müller, and other illustrious archeologists, anthropologists, philologists and historians have resuscitated ruins, revived dead civilizations, made ancient history palpitate with life.

What is even more wonderful, mind, not satisfied with having interrogated and explained the external world, has turned to itself and sounded the bottomless depths of its own psychical life. Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Bruno, Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Spencer, William James, Bergson, Benedetto Croce are a few of the long train of heroes in man's colossal struggle for the knowledge of himself.

We are told, in the inspired book, that man is an inefable partaker of godhead. (St. John. X 34). The same book affirms, even more explicitly, that man is a god. (Ps. 82. v.: 6). Before the creative spark of man's genius we feel the truthfulness of those statements in their widest and deepest significance.

To say that man abstracts, generalizes, relates, coordinates, classifies, forms ideas and formulates laws is to say that he conceives the "absolute" and the "uni-

versal". Thus, man, who seems to be such a small thing in the vastness of creation, is, through his conception of the absolute, greater than all creation. A point in space contains him; yet he contains in himself all the world. Nature does not comprehend either the greatness of man or its own greatness. Man comprehends himself and the world.

## VII

Mind's metaphysical power does not limit itself to natural and intellectual reality. It extends to the ethical.

Man has the idea of absolute moral value, of goodness, of spiritual beauty. This conception of an ethical world is purely a spiritual product. Justice and injustice, right and wrong, worth and demerit, duty, obligation, responsibility, moral sanction are relations of which there is no trace in the natural world.

Man, besides conceiving moral reality, is able to live it. He possesses not only a mind, but a will. He is endowed with logical as well as emotional faculties. Love, kindness, sympathy, generosity, social obligation, forgiveness, denial or self, altruism as well as hatred, harshness, cruelty, misanthropy, selfishness, revenge are part of his life.

He apprehends the good as something ennobling his own nature, and evil as debasing it. He sees in the good a reflection of God, the "Summum Bonum". He realizes that evil is a negation of God's infinite goodness and perfection.

Moreover, man is a "free" volitive being. Reason discovers to him the intrinsic desirability of the good; yet he has the power of choosing evil. Mind depicts to him, more or less vividly, the inherent ugliness and

repulsiveness of evil; yet he can, if he wills, prefer evil to the good.

No predetermining influence can affect his choice. He moves toward it spontaneously and voluntarily. The whole conception of "worth" rests on the freedom of man's will. Unless he were free in his choice, he would be incapable of either merit or demerit.

This freedom is a fact of infinite spiritual significance. The abstracting power of mind prevents man from being enslaved to concrete objects and enables him to wander throughout the luminous realms of transcending reality. Even so will's freedom prevents man from being a slave in the moral domain. He is free; therefore he is the controller of his inclinations, appetites and passions. He is master and sovereign of his instincts, volitions and acts.

The conscious process involved in effecting a decision, in the moral sphere, reveals man as an essentially spiritual being. Man has, in his intelligence, a spark of God's mind. In his will he has a throbbing of God's soul.

### VIII

But do not animals also possess an intelligence? Are not animal's processes of thought similar to those of man? Do not they possess emotional faculties? Are they not endowed with a will to give effect to these faculties?

Careful observations of animal life have not convinced us that experience can develop their logical and emotional powers to a remarkable degree? Does, after all, any greater mental difference exist between an ape and a Fiji Islander than between the latter and Dante, Michelangelo and Beethoven? Is it not true that only cultivation of intellect has given man his greater ability

of abstraction and generalization, and that his superior mental evolution is the result of a more persistent effort? Can we, then, logically attribute to man spirituality, without according it also to the rest of the animals?

Indeed we cannot deny that animals possess an intelligence and a will. Yet, if in all faculties possessed by man and animals the resemblance is great, the difference is immense. It is not only a matter of degree, but also of kind. In every case the relation between animal's and man's faculties is that of the shadow to the substance, the promise to the fulfillment, the embryo to the child.

Both in animal and man every mental state and mental change corresponds with a particular brain-state and brain-change. The physical and psychical series correspond with each other, term for term. But in animal and man the causal relation between mind and the brain, the physical and psychical element, are in an inversed order.

In animals brain-changes are always the cause of psychical phenomena. On the contrary, in man's higher activities psychical change precedes and determines brain-change. Animal's brain-changes are invariably determined by external impressions; in man alone they can be produced by internal impressions.

Man alone can perceive properties and relations abstracted from the objects. He alone can perceive relations not only between objects, but also between ideas. He can form not only "percepts", but also "concepts". In man alone there is an inner world, a "microcosm", the things or objects of which are ideas. The power of animal's intelligence merely "reacts" as played upon by external nature; the conscious power of man's spirit "acts" on the thing itself.

It is not denied here that, when we think, some special atomic motion may go on in the brain-cells; but this is merely an unconscious movement, of which there are many samples in bodily function. But when we directly begin to attain to mental process, we leave the physical region as understood by us, and enter a more deeply mysterious region. We enter the awful domain of the psychical, the metaphysical, the supernatural, the spirit. We find, in the medullous cerebral recesses, a divine spark at work.

Thus we may say that animals possess an intelligence, but not a reason. They possess feelings, emotions and memory; but they do not analyze, abstract and generalize. The process of their mind is not syllogistic. Their mental activity is not exercised consciously.

The same limitation is revealed in the animal's volitive process. Animal is endowed with a will, but not a free-will. An animal's will is an instinctive rather than a reflex movement. Its volition is characterized by mechanism rather than by finalism. An animal acts under the influence of nature's pre-determination. Its actions are not the result of a free decision. The potentiality and perfectibility of an animal's will are finite. In brief, an animal's will is only a shadow of man's will.

Man's intelligence develops itself to the heights of inventive and creative genius. Even so man's will reaches the sublime perfection of self-sacrifice for the sake of God and the children of God. An animal's instinctive love for his offspring may lead it to lay down its life; but only man is capable of giving up himself for the moral and spiritual uplift of unknown, even inimical, men. Only in man love really proves itself to be stronger than death.

In man alone the spiritual world is capable of affirming

itself over the material, to the degree of not only subordinating to itself, but of denying and annihilating it, also.

## IX

This spiritual transcendence of man over animals is evidenced by other facts.

An animal can express his feelings only through the rudimentary and inadequate form of a "sign-language". Man, through his rational "grammatico-syntactical" speech can give expression to the innermost feelings and thoughts.

Again. There are animals which seem capable of a remarkably constructive art. The bee's hive strikes us by the perfection of its structure. Yet the bee has, since its creation, always built its abode in the same way. It has never improved on it. It is only man's art that is truly rational and progressive. What a bewildering progress from the dolmens and the huts of primitive men to the modern office-building and residential mansions of our cities! . . .

The position itself of man's body proclaims his spiritual superiority. All animals, none accepted, look downward. Their stooping position seems to affirm that they are from, and for, the earth. Man alone, in the whole creation, stands sublimely erect. He stands on the earth, but he looks up to heaven. He treads upon the earth's surface, but his eyes and forehead wander throughout the luminous depths of the skies. He is from the earth, but not for the earth.

Man is clothed with a material body, but he is also endowed with a spiritual soul. He is the product of the dust of the ground, but he is also an immortal image and likeness of God.

“What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.” (Ps. VIII. 4-5).

*All that hath been majestic  
In life or death since time began  
Is native in the simple heart of all,  
The angel heart of man.*

*Oh mighty brother-soul of man,  
Where'er thou art, in low or high,  
Thy skyey arches with exulting span  
O'er-roof infinity.*

*All thoughts that mold age begin  
Deep down within the primitive soul,  
And from the many, slowly upward wing  
To One who grasps the whole.*

CHAPTER IV  
SELF-CONSCIOUS PERSONALITY  
AND  
IMMORTALITY

I

All the proofs brought forth so far have not solved the problem of man's Immortality.

That man, insofar as he is an intelligence and a will, is immortal, none is apt to deny. There is in human life something absolute and eternal, which space does not comprehend and time does not measure, something whose value is independent of personal feelings, interests and vicissitudes. The reality which is neither matter, nor space, nor time, but is, on the contrary, absolute-ness, consciousness, and apprehension of a transcending world, cannot die.

If man is thought and will, he does not die. Man, or, better, what in man is thought and will, cannot perish. The dialectic process of thought, the synthesis of will are incommensurable with chemical and physiological processes, of which death is a moment.

Death is a physical and organic phenomenon. To speak of the death of the spirit is to apply to it a category to which it rebels. It is like judging the beauty of a picture by the chemical composition of the colours, or measuring by a thermometer the degree of mental persuasion.

If man were only spirit, thought and will, one would

immediately understand that the notion of death is foreign and inapplicable to him. But man, the concrete man, is neither a spirit nor an organism alone. He is both. Therefore, in order to be able to tell whether or not man is immortal it is necessary to know what man is, how he is constituted, where the basis of human personality lies and what the content of the moral "ego" is. In other words it is necessary to prove that self-consciousness, personality, the "ego" does not die.

To all appearances this "ego" does seem to perish. Behold a dying man, an adult, who has laboriously constructed to himself a moral personality, a history of his own, unique and ineffable. Let us suppose that dying means the escaping of the individual, monad spirit from an organism which is extinguishing itself.

The "ego" loses all the activities which were bound to the organism, detaches himself from all known things, from the earth, in which he grew, and his dear ones.

The rhythm of his thoughts and feelings, measured by external objects, ceases. He is no longer fed by sensations or affected by newness of development. He becomes what? A thought of the thought.

Memory, which was a slow selection and succession of fragmentary psychical states, becomes a simultaneous presence of all the heterogeneous sequence of those states and of past volitions. Will, an act of willed things to be either rejected or conquered, becomes what? A will of the universal will.

What kind of life, we are asked, is this? What notions, what experiences shall we apply to it, in order to understand it? If, even in the earthly life, personality is rapidly transformed by the change of the external background, what shall happen to man, when not only the background, but the very organ of contact with the

same is totally suppressed? Shall we not say that a man, as a personality, dies?

Emphatically no! He seems to die, but he does not. He cannot die. Thought and will return to the source and reservoir of the spirit, but not without their identifying and individuating characteristics. Man is immortal not only as a spirit, but as an individual spirit, a personality.

Can personality die? If not, why? What is personality? Is personality the intrinsic cause of Immortality, or is it dependent on something more simple and fundamental?

The answer to all this was partially given, when expounding evolution. The upward movement by which the forces of nature develop gradually into higher forms of life is wholly by increasing "individuation".

In the organic scale we find an increasing individuation of bodily forms which completes itself, as a perfect organic individual, in the higher animal. Likewise, in the dynamic realm, force and energy (i.e., the Spirit moving, at first, upon the face of the waters) develops by a process of individuation, until it reaches completeness as a "spirit-individual", or personality, in man.

This individuation of Spirit in man imports the capability, on the part of the same Spirit, of a separate existence, or the potentiality of existing as an entity separate from the universality of the being, and, consequently, self-conscious. It imports a breaking away of the Spirit from physical connection with the forces of nature. It means the severance of the Spirit-embryo from the womb of nature, and its birth into an independent life.

This completed "Spirit-individuality" explains, as nothing else does, what is characteristic of man. It is this

which makes up personality or the self-acting "ego". It is this which constitutes self-consciousness, reflective intelligence, and free moral will.

Thus the appearance of self-consciousness among the psychical phenomena is connected with the very act of Spirit-birth. The moment the Spirit completely individuates itself in man, man becomes conscious of self, turns his thoughts upon himself and the mystery of his existence as separate and distinct from nature. That moment nature becomes a "person"; animality becomes "humanity"; it becomes "he". At that moment come, with self-consciousness personality, reason, free will, capacity of apprehending God, the recognition of relations to other beings, moral responsibility and Immortality. At that moment the seeds of religion, ethics, philosophy, science, letters, arts and progress are sown.

Spirit-immortality appears like the stupendous climax of natural development. Through the whole geological history of the earth the Spirit is being gestated in the womb of nature. It is after a long embryonic development that it comes to birth, independent life, and Immortality, in man.

Nature has no meaning without this consummation. All evolution has its beginning, its course and its end. Without Spirit-immortality this cosmos, which has been developing into increasing beauty, for so many millions of years, would be lacking the last touch of perfection.

Will then anyone wonder that personal Immortality is claimed for man? Why, could a spirit-individuality, or a personality, perish? Decidedly no. Existing as a separate entity, and, therefore, self-conscious, means being immortal. An independent spiritual life supposes and implies Immortality. Spirit-viability is Immortality.

There is an intrinsic contradiction between these two terms: self-conscious and mortal. In order to be able

to reflect upon nature and to think its laws a being must be severed from nature; if distinct from nature, he is not subject to its vicissitudes (of which death is one); if not under the control of nature, he is in possession of a full and complete spirit-life. This completeness of spirit-life means survival over bodily disintegration, intrinsic persistency, Immortality.

### III

What are the attributes and manifestations of self-consciousness and personality?

First of all, consciousness of self is the most distinguishing mark of human nature, and the most intrinsically significant. Man not only is, but knows that he is. He not only knows, but he is aware of his knowing. He feels and knows that he is "himself".

Of all verbal ideas the "ego" is the simplest, and the deepest. Of all phonetic utterances it is the most instinctive and natural. It is the affirmation that man exists as a specific individual. It is the testifier of man's personal identity. Man thinks his identity, and self-consciousness is the result.

All the manifestations of man's physical and psychical life reveal a personality. Mental life occurs in relation to a conscious self. Such things as self-respect, personal dignity, independence of character, moral responsibility, etc. can be conceived only in relation to a conscious personality.

All our physical and mental differences, expressed in temperament, grade of intelligence, physiognomy, characteristic gestures, handwriting, literary style, and our moral tendencies, expressed in ideas, opinions, ideals, inclinations, hopes: in brief, all the individual traits that differentiate the existence of a man from that of

the mass of men spring from consciousness of self. Conscious personality is the individuation, in man, of the general psychology of thought, feeling, and will.

Secondly, self-consciousness is a "reflective" act. It means mental reaction upon things and self, appropriation of external and internal experiences, unity of such experiences, and a biographical "continuum". Self-conscious personality, however, is more than the sum of its experiences.

We may be reminded that there is also an animal consciousness. But we maintain that it belongs to an intrinsically lower order. It is characterized by a unity of physical, rather than psychical, experience. Animal experience lacks coherence, continuity, and, consequently, self-consciousness.

The animal does not conceive its existence as separate from nature. It does not discriminate between itself and the outer world. It is not a unity complete in itself. It is "it", not "he". In brief, the animal is not self-conscious.

Thirdly, it belongs to the very essence of personality to be "permanent". If permanence is attributed to all intrinsic and constructive essence of things, it is claimed, a fortiori, for the self of man. Personality is the most essential of all realities, and, consequently, the most enduring.

There is nothing in the world more consistent and real than that harmonious whole formed by intellect, memory, consciousness, and will. Personality dominates and transcends all temporal modes of expression, and so is essentially eternal wherever it exists.

True, a higher animal, an insect, even a tree has a life of its own; but we cannot imagine them possessing consciousness and personality. They appear to be merely graded units in a world of being. Their life is essen-

tially circumscribed by temporal modes of expression. They share in a general life, a life more or less developed, yet unidentified, unconscious, impersonal. They are still gestated in the womb of nature. Their permanence will, therefore, be necessarily characterized by impersonality.

Not so the permanence of man's soul. Man exists as a self-conscious being. He possesses an individual characteristic, a personality. With his physical organism not only physical life, but intellect, will and emotions are associated. These principles, faculties or activities have a real and undeniable existence.

Genius, love, ideals and self-sacrifice strengthen, beautify, spiritualize human existence to such an extent that it is no longer a mere function of the material aggregate (in which, for a time, it is embodied, and through which it manifests itself), but belongs to a universe of spirit, closely and mysteriously related to immanent and, at once, transcendent Deity. Man rises to the attainments of God-like faculties. He becomes a living image of God. He realizes divinity in himself, he becomes a god.) Ps. 82. v.: 6). What then? If all that is real is immortal, can there be doubt about the continuance of personality?

Man may return, in some sense, to the absolute source of reality, but not without his individual character.

Fourthly, personality is an "inalienable" attribute of man. Once the spirit-embryo, by birth, severs itself from the womb of nature and attains an independent existence, it cannot, by any means and under any circumstances, return to former physical dependence. Once the capability of individual life is conquered, it can no longer be lost. Individuality cannot be absorbed by universality. What was once identified, cannot become unidentified. "He" cannot revert to "it". The great

law of life is *development*, becoming. *Invelopment* and *uncoming* are the negation of life.

An analogy may be drawn from the physical and psychical existence of man. Human organism lives and dies not as a part of a universal, unidentified bodily reality, but as a particular, individuated entity. If, by an hypothesis, the body could live eternally, it would live as an individual body.

The same is true of spiritual reality. If, by an absurd supposition, the spirit of man could die, it would die as an individual spirit.

Analogously, if the spirit survives bodily disintegration, it must perpetuate itself as an individual spirit, as a personality. The "It-spirit" cannot be a continuation of the "He-spirit".

#### IV

From the aforesaid it logically follows that the Immortality of the soul includes necessarily identity, unity, continuity of the conscious living being. Were the soul, after leaving the material organism, to lose its individuality, it would no longer be a continuity and a permanence of itself. It would be a different soul, not identically the same soul.

This amounts to nothing less than a destruction of the soul. The loss of self-conscious personality would mean the spiritual death of the soul. It would, indeed, be the only kind of death of which the soul is capable.

Moreover the hypothesis that the conscious "self" of man may return to the source of universal life unindividuated, means the annihilation of the whole intellectual and moral reality. The infinite perfectibility of intelligence and will would be abruptly arrested. Truth and

goodness would lose their deepest meaning and most intrinsic value.

We know that the more the mind develops itself in the research of truth, the more fully it equips itself for further understanding. The intense exercise of mental powers refines and spiritualizes man; it increases his metaphysical powers, it fits and prepares him for more direct intuition and clearer contemplation.

The Psalmist, in his sublime vision of the gradual ascending of man, saw that each degree of perfection attained by his soul is a step to a higher and more glorious spiritual liberty. The just "ascensiones in corde suo disposuit"; he goes "de virtute in virtutem" (Ps. 84. v.: 5-7. Vulgate).

If the conscious self of man were to be lost into the totality of the spirit, all this mental equipment would become quite useless. The highest intelligence, the deepest acumen, the most luminous genius, in being absorbed into the universality of the spirit, would either lose, at once, the possibility of further development, or (if we were to admit that the universal unidentified spirit is capable of mental activity) it would descend to the level of the average spirit-mentality.

Likewise the moral perfectibility of the soul would abruptly come to an end. The God-like powers, developed in the soul by the constant exercise of love, would be denied continuity of ascensional life. The great moral personalities of a Paul of Tarsus, Augustine of Hippo, Francis of Assisi, and of all the sublime heroes of love, would end into a meaningless absorption by the universal spirit. They would find themselves in a chaotic touch with the degrading, repulsive spirit of all the egoists, the tyrants, the monsters of mankind.

Could a more absurd kind of life be conceived? The survival of man's personality is, consequently, demanded on the ground of the absolute reality of truth and goodness.

*That each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,*

*Is faith as vague as all unsweet:  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside;  
And I shall know Him when we meet.*

## CHAPTER V

### HOW CAN PERSONALITY SURVIVE?

#### I

If the fact of the permanence of the "self", or personal Immortality, is beyond doubt, the mode of such survival of personality offers a large field for speculations. The nature itself of the problem, as is the case in all psychical and metaphysical matters, rebels against a scientific investigation, based on purely experimental method and process. In the realm of metaphysical reality to ask scientific evidence is to demand the impossible. We must satisfy ourselves with hypotheses, theories and opinions.

How, then, the conscious "self" of man can survive? If we resolve man into his constitutive elements, or, better, if we consider separately the concepts by which we express, in turn, his reality, we find out that the notion of death becomes to some of such concepts, but is foreign and inapplicable to others.

However, the unique reality which verifies these divers and opposite notions is the "ego". What notion are we to apply to the "ego"? Can we say, at once, that the "ego" dies insofar as it is a physical body, but it does not die insofar as it is thought and will?

Pressed by the difficulty of this question, philosophers and scientists have followed three ways.

The first, the easiest and simplest, is that of dividing man in two, i.e., body and soul. The body disintegrates, while the spirit, or soul, returns to the sphere wherefrom

it had descended. The body dies, so the popular expression runs, and the soul lives.

But anyone who knows a little of philosophy realizes that the simplicity of such explanation is only apparent. It is a mere dualism, which explains nothing. For, on one hand, we know that two are not one. The unity of the "ego", an act of consciousness, is a spiritual act, and, consequently, pure spirituality. It is, at the same time, self-consciousness of the body, and, therefore, pure corporality.

On the other hand, a finite spirit, which, in the process of its "becoming" is a pure spiritual act of what we call finite concreteness, and a limitation of space, time, and matter, is outside our experience. Also a matter, which is not pervaded, somehow, by spirituality, is inconceivable.

The distinction and duality, involved in this first answer, did not succeed in remaining radical and original, and was, consequently, compelled to reduce itself to unity.

## II

Dualism having been put aside, thinkers sought the synthesis of the opposite principles either in rationality or in matter, in idealism or positivism.

Positivism, renouncing to the substance-individual, to the monad-soul, resolved the "ego" into the natural formations of physical and chemical reality.

On the other hand, idealism converted the substance-individual into the one, infinite, and "becoming" reality of the spirit.

Both these radical doctrines deny all possibility of attributing consistency, beyond death, to the "ego", as

an empirical subject and a fugitive moment of a partial "becoming".

However, after a century of endeavours, by the champions of both systems, dissatisfaction remains. For, if reality is interpreted in terms of pure thought, the concrete, the individual, the "ego" (which is this ego, and not another, or all the others) vanishes into the empty universality of the idea. If, on the contrary, reality is interpreted in terms of material concreteness, the idea fades away into an illimited nominalism, and the spirit disappears as a concrete and living synthesis of unity.

### III

Two intermediate solutions have been attempted. The one consists in a "psychical materialism", which although purposing not to renounce the fundamental exigencies of materialism, places the human "ego" or psyche, in a reality less heavily corporeal than physical organism, which would be, somehow, its involucre, aliment and instrument.

Psycho-materialists maintain that this principle of physio-psychical life can, by the development of corporeal life, (which would correspond to an embryonal and larva-like period of existence) gradually constitute itself and acquire contact with a vaster and more subtle matter, as the psychic facts allow us to suppose.

The active life-principle, as understood by psychical materialism, is able to come out of the involucre, without ceasing to be, and recommence its way and life in a less material world, inaccessible to us.

This is the direction taken by Fechner, in his: "Über die Seelenfrage" (of which Paulsen gave us a second edition in 1907). It is also the road pursued by Pro-

fessor Myers, many other spiritualists, and all the representatives of that movement and method of investigation which culminated in the London's "Society for Psychical Research".

On the other hand, we have a kind of attenuation of absolute idealism in the "personal idealism" of a recent English school, in the "activism" of Eucken, in the "objective idealism" and other doctrines, wherein the constitution of personality acquires, in the spiritual world, a central significance. For personality, far from losing itself in spiritual unity (in which, indeed, its deepest roots lie) enters the center of life, and consolidates itself, through the process of self-consciousness and the acceptance of moral exigencies.

Both these doctrines are intermediate steps. They return either to dualism or pluralism. They do not entirely escape the criticism advanced against absolute materialism and idealism. Psycho-materialism and attenuated absolute idealism do not succeed in building up to themselves a strong dialectic basis. However they offer a large field for speculations, which, if not altogether barren, yet are far from being fecund of conclusive evidence.

#### IV

It is not surprising, then, that a more recent philosophy has endeavoured to free itself from all difficulties, by denying the possibility of solving dialectically the problem of personal Immortality.

The pretension to rationalize the universe, and understand human personality in its intrinsic and constitutive elements has been regarded as vain and useless. The problem of Immortality, insofar as it is the affirmation of the permanence of an "ego", sub-

tracted from the vicissitudes of the cosmos and the "becoming", has been declared to be outside our possibility of sure knowledge and intellectual experience.

In the "pragmatism" of W. James, and, more acutely, in the "intuitionism" of Bergson, the whole intelligence is instinct, immediateness of vision, intuition. A reflection of thought on the totality of the being, and, consequently, on the essence of the "ego", is, thus, excluded by the very nature and task of intelligence, whose circumscribed function is directed by its instinct as well as by the exigencies of life. A mental reflection on the essence of the "ego" is, therefore, contained in, and exceeded by, the totality of the being, unseizable in its complex.

## V

Such, in brief, is the contribution of systematic reason to the questions which men perpetually address to themselves: What is life? What is death?

In order to answer them, philosophy ought to have previously answered these other questions: what is the "ego"?; from what does it proceed my being "myself", and not somebody else's?; what is the origin of the subject of consciousness and self-consciousness?; what is the source and meaning of the unity and synthesis of that process of acts which the categorizing and dissecting reason affirms to be the whole of one's "self"?

Philosophy has not, and could not, answer these questions. Like Bergson, philosophy repeats (thus rehabilitating Scholasticism) that it has to do with notions and essences alone, while the act of the being, per-

petually pursued, perpetually escapes. The "ego", as the act of the being, as a "quid" concretely existing, is beyond its domain: "individuum ineffabile".

## VI

This incomprehensibility of the permanence of the "ego" has led many to the definite renunciation not only of the possibility of our understanding it, but also of the fact of its objective reality. Nothing could be more unjustified than this confusing the mode of the permanence of personality with its reality.

The fact that we do not know how the "ego" survives is no reason for denying, or doubting, the survival itself. Because the actual alterations in the nervous system are not exactly known from physiological experiments we should, by no means, be warranted in denying the fact of nervous alterations. Our ignorance as to why given modifications of the nervous system are accompanied by given states of consciousness could not be a sufficient reason for refusing to admit the reality of consciousness.

Again, in the analysis of mental activity we do not know the exact boundaries where the physical process ends and the psychical begins. Yet we could not overthrow the fact that the brain is the place where those two processes meet. Yet again. We do not know why and how organic continuity is accompanied by self-conscious personality. Yet we cannot call in doubt this psychical reality.

True, philosophy, unable to answer the questions: what is life?, what is death? can only help man to address to himself, with a greater logical clearness, these two fundamental inquiries. Yet man, the maker and

elaborator of philosophy, realizes that the Immortality of the "ego" is necessarily affirmed by an act of the intellect and will.

*The baby new to earth and sky,  
What time his tender palm is pressed  
Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that "this is I":*

*But as he grows he gathers much,  
And learns the use of "I" and "me",  
And finds "I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch":*

*So rounds he to a separate mind  
From whence clear memory may begin,  
As through the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.*

*This use may lie in blood and breath,  
Which else were fruitless of their due,  
Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of Death.*

## CHAPTER VI

### MORAL CHARACTER OF THE SOUL AND IMMORTALITY

#### I

The strongest proof for Immortality is, doubtless, deduced from the moral character of the soul.

Moral will is the supreme characteristic of man. No truer definition of man could be given than that describing him as an essentially moral personality. "Homines nihil aliud quam voluntates", wrote the fine psychologist of Hippo, St. Augustine. The real significance of the soul consists in moral activity.

The beasts perform, though unconsciously and rudimentarily, all the processes of mind. They understand, they remember, they possess emotional powers, they are endowed with a will. But they have no conception of Deity, and, consequently, their soul is lacking moral character. The faculty to recognize a Supreme Being and the capacity to apprehend him belong exclusively to man.

Man, it is said, is a body, a mind and a soul. The first of these attributes belongs to man and beast. The second is also shared, though in different proportion and degree by both. But the third is an exclusive possession of man.

The phenomenon of the soul is the "experimentum crucis" of materialism. Positivistic science can account for all phenomena, except that of the soul. It is able to discover resemblances between beast and man in physi-

cal structure, physiological functions, emotional feelings and intellectual faculties. But here the resemblance ceases. Here materialism becomes silent: "And man became a living SOUL."

That soul cannot be either physical existence or mental power, of which man is participant in common with all other animals. It is a capacity to recognize the existence, truthfulness and justice of a Supreme Being. It is a Godward power, an aspiration to the Infinite, a sharing in the Absolute. It is a moral character, an ethical relation, a religious reality.

## II

Man's moral will has a character of absoluteness. St. Augustine teaches that the Immortality of the soul follows from its participation in the eternal truth. We add that it follows, even more directly, from its participation in the absolute good. Immortality is a fundamental postulate of the will to good, conceived as a will of the absolute and the eternal.

In the affective states of our souls we discern what is occasional and fugitive, what is caprice, ephemeron and momentariness from what, answering to our most intimate nature and proceeding from it, exacts stability and perennality.

By this criterion we distinguish our good acts from the bad ones. What we feel to be, and call, evil, does not, by any means, appear to us as unworthy to be willed. If it were so, we would not will it. We will it, because, here and now, it is, somehow, good for us.

What we see in it is its precariousness. We notice the fact that that good (which is really evil) is being suggested to, and almost imposed upon us, through our weakness, by something which is outside of us, and

which we ought, yet do not know how, to dominate. We realize that that good is not co-ordinable to a will which is known and possessed in its entirety, i. e., moral will.

That good is an actuality, but fragmentary, dispersed, heterogeneous. It is not an act of the interior "ego". It is not an act which can be reduced to totality or absoluteness, both of the will and its object.

Where the whole will is a momentary equation of concrete subject and object, every act is wholly exhausted in itself, and, consequently, there can be neither good nor evil, as in the beasts and in human infancy.

Only when the actual will is no longer an actuality entirely defined by its immediate and concrete object, but an awareful placing of the same object in the realm of scopes and finalities, (or, in other words, a consciousness of pure and absolute will) is there a discrimination between good and evil.

Moral distinction takes place only when the will becomes awarefulness of the "ego", which, in the successive acts and states of consciousness, though remaining one, yet is being increased and interiorly enriched by the possession of itself and of things. Moral valuation is borne at once with this mobile and yet rectilinear self-consciousness, which transcends, both as a subject and an object, all concreteness of given and determined things.

The good is, therefore, for us, as well as in itself, what is willed, not for, and in, the moment, but "sub specie aeternitatis". It is what is "absolutely" willed.

If all is ephemeral, if all passes away and changes itself, it does not pay to will anything, or even possess a will. Such is the doctrine of radical evil. Schopenhauer, after Indian philosophy, has given us the demonstration thereof.

Accordingly, the "maximum" of wisdom will be to inebriate oneself with the moment, to dionysiacally enjoy the conquest and possession of what appears either good or evil in itself, without relation to the hereafter and the beyond. From Schopenhauer descends Nietzsche.

The object, worthy to be willed, must be able to be willed "per se", in itself, as a transcendent reality, and actuation of an eternal and universal rule of the spirit. This is equivalent to saying that the object must be reducible to this spiritual norm and containable therein. In other words, the will (since it creates its object and gives it that perenniality and absoluteness which it intrinsically possesses) must recognize itself, in the value of its good act, as eternal and absolute.

### III

Thus Immortality is essentially implicated by the good will. The will which establishes and actuates an absolute norm, and wills transient objects only insofar as it removes them from the sphere of the impermanent and puts them in existence as absolute objects of an absolute willing, is a will that does not, and cannot, die. Human will is ensphered in the eternal.

Death, as such, is the category of the "*unmoral*", and, in man, of the "*immoral*". Who wills the evil, is a creator of death, an originator of wars, a destroyer. On the contrary, the category of the good is that of life, of the Eternal, of Immortality.

Two objections can be advanced against this doctrine. The one is that our arguing regards the will in its universality, and not this single will of ours, and, consequently, Immortality may accrue to the universal spirit, but not to the individual and empirical spirits.

Such difficulty is easily solvable. If absolute spirit is not a pure abstraction, this spirit of mine is the abso-

lute. What is outside myself, and of every act of consciousness developing into self-consciousness, is also outside the Spirit, is a non-reality. What is denied by this spirit of mine is denied by "the" spirit, and vice-versa. If I have the right to affirm that "the spirit is immortal", I am also justified in saying: "I am the immortal spirit", and, as such, I think, will and act for eternity.

The other objection is that, even if we admit this internal dialectics of the will, we do not know whether the will itself and this content of it are a reality or an illusion. We mortals are, in substance, but an experiment in the making. How and to what will such experiment, full of contrasts, succeed?

The answer to this difficulty is also at hand. The act of the will, the will itself, which wills its object and actuates in it an eternal value, is "before" all our acts, and "in" each of them. It is the absolute and transcendental "prius". As he who thinks cannot help thinking, even if he denies thought, so he who wills cannot help willing, even if he wishes to deny the will.

In one single act, in each of our acts, the whole will is implicated, with all its exigencies. Doubt, absolute pessimism, nihilistic scepticism is a critical reflection, an undoubling of the act of the will, an object of the will, and, as such, it is the absolute. The nothingness, the nirvana, becomes the supreme good, and the thirst of both men and gods.

#### IV

We may substitute the word "love" for will, and come to the same conclusion. Immortality is a fundamental postulate of love, conceived as an absolute value. True and deep love, the love which is not a momentary caprice nor a sensual enjoyment, goes from the whole being to the whole being. It is, in the same degree, possession

and dedication of self; put to test, it is supreme self-sacrifice. Now then, man can live for futile things, but he does not die, consciously and willingly, except for eternal things.

True love, which appropriates the object to itself, identifies itself with it, surrounds it with a kind of perennial consecration, conceives that object beyond all contingencies of life and as having an absolute and eternal value. Dante's Paolo and Francesca, in the ceaseless infernal whirlwind, are bound by a love and a sorrow eternal.

All forms of life are frail, and man is fully conscious of it. All empirical objects dissolve themselves; and yet love is a radical negation of this death, it fights against it, it affirms the realities which are beyond space and time.

If the love of ourselves appear a suspicious judge, the love for fellow-men, the fatherland, friends, the ideal, is a more acceptable witness. For it implies the most unselfish and purest thinking, doing and giving. It is wholly turned toward the future. It is exigency and a partial position of an ulterior reality, for the sake of which the whole life appears well employed.

If this act of love, in which life is summarized, is above itself and the moment, if actuality is inferior to it, it transcends also the whole series, or, rather, annuls it as a series and conceives it as an absolute actuality, as perennality.

The Christian martyr who prefers to die rather than renounce his faith in Christ, puts his act in eternity. Likewise the reformer, who sacrifices himself on the altar of the religious and moral ideal, gives his act a character of absoluteness. The American soldier who, for the sake of justice and human liberty, gives up his

life on the battlefields of France, acts within the sphere of absolute reality.

A conscious supreme self-sacrifice, an heroic renunciation of life, for the sake of a relative and ephemeral object, is an absurdity.

If everything, in men who love as well as in what they love, were mortal, there would be, in the act of love, something "plus", a "residuum", which is vanity and illusion, and yet, at the same time, the very substance of love. Consequently, love and universal vanity are irreconcilable, and, in the fulness of consciousness, one necessarily destroys the other.

## V

This is not all. The "ego" may be considered from a triple point of view. There is the grossly "empirical" ego, which may seem entirely absorbed by external vicissitudes, in whose flow it moves itself and is moved. It appears essentially circumscribed by the narrow boundaries of such vicissitudes.

There is, besides, the "transcendant" and absolute ego of philosophy, which conceives and realizes both itself and the world as a dialectical and volitional process, of which the concrete individuals are but self-multiplying exemplifications and infinitesimal moments.

There is, finally, the real and "moral" ego, that is the consciousness which becomes self-consciousness, the personality which fights to constitute and conquer itself, and, in itself, the world, by making it not only "itsown", but "itself."

The process of moral life consists in this vigilant, assiduous, powerful endeavor by which man seeks to realize himself as a spirit and the divine exigencies of the spirit, which find their greatest expression in the pure religious precept.

On one hand, moral conscience tends to elevate itself to this universal and absolute norm of the good; on the other, by an identical process, it aspires to develop itself, more and more, as a conscious "ego," to obey an interior law, and to replace heteronomy with autonomy. In brief, it moves in the direction of being more fully, consciously and spiritually "self". The maximum of universality coincides with the maximum of personality.

Is it, then, possible, that this process of moral life, insofar as it is a growing affirmation of the true "ego", and causes such affirmation to be the supreme law of life, may end in nothingness? Is it possible for moral consciousness to accept such conclusion, which contradicts its first and supreme exigence, i.e. "Be the universal", translated by the same process into the other formula: "Be thyself"?

This would amount to saying to moral consciousness: "Gather and concentrate thyself, by dominating thy inferior instincts and cutting off all that impedes and delays thee; measure usefulness, pleasure and sorrow only from the view-point of their contribution to thy spiritual "ego", because the ultimate issue of all this work of thine will be the definite and complete annulment of the same!" . . . .

Were we to deny moral exigence the character of absoluteness, we would speak to man thus: "Be an apostle, a hero, a martyr, a saint, because all that for which you stand, fight, suffer, agonize will finally perish, your attainments will vanish, your great dream of perfection will be abruptly wiped out, all your ideals, hopes, sweet presentments will be cruelly shattered. Grow in mind and soul, lift thyself higher and higher, because the goal of all your evolution will be a sudden halt, the apex of your ascent will be engulfment into universal annihilation. Never cease to enrich thy inner self, be-

cause, for every "plus" of present endeavor there will be a "minus" of future result, the "maximum" of self-affirmation and ideal construction will be absorbed by a "nihil" of utter destruction, and the entire process of your existence will reduce itself to the supreme, tragic equation that  $X = 0$ . Overcome misery, crime, injustice, every form of evil, because all your victories and triumphs over the enemies of mankind will end into the final disaster of the grave. Dare to live, and make others live, for the sake of truth and love, because the flower of life, material as well as immaterial, is death."

Such, one might remark, is human being; it is the actuation of the absolute in the moment. Being so infinitely little, as we are, the absolute, even though it be in the moment, in a sufficient prize for us.

But, we answer, the radical impermanence of the act, which actuates absolute values, would not, in such an hypothesis, coincide with the impermanence of the same values? What kind of absolute is this, to which only and always corresponds an infinitesimal and frail fragment, which is denied as soon as affirmed?

## VI

We may add that the development of personality is a gradual and ceaseless extension of it to new elements of the interior, as well as the exterior, world. The life of the spirit consists in converting things into elements of living synthesis, of conscious personality, and of realization of the absolute.

If every process resolves itself, historically, into the negation of the "ego", the whole process of the being would definitely be a passage from the "ego" to the "non-ego", to a "non-doing", to a "non-actuating". Life would work for death. The apex of the process, the

“prius”, would be an absolute negation, the absolute nothingness.

Unless we wish to admit such an evident absurdity, we are compelled to affirm the absoluteness of the process of moral life, which logically includes, and is equivalent to, the Immortality of man’s personality.

*The wish that of the living whole  
No life may fall beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul?*

## CHAPTER VII

### FAITH AND IMMORTALITY

*"What, then, is man? He endures but an hour, and is crushed before the moth. Yet in the being and in the working of a faithful man is there already a something that pertains not to this wild death-clement of Time, that triumphs over Time, and is and will be when Time shall be no more."—Carlyle.*

#### I

The preceding pages make it clear that Immortality, insofar as it is the vision of life "sub specie aeternitatis," the realization of absolute values and good will (which is a will of the perennial and the universal) is the fundamental postulate of action. To act well is to act for Immortality. Who does good, acts immortally.

Eternal life is the very essence of a good act. If we are told that good will is in heaven, it is because absolute goodness, which good will recognizes and actuates, is heaven.

Goodness is an affirmation of the permanence of values; the permanence of values is permanence of the valuing spirit; the permanence of the spirit is the permanence of "this" spirit, which is, in some incomprehensible manner "mine," or, rather, "myself."

Faith in Immortality is, consequently, implicit in all good actions, for there is no evil deed or will, except insofar as it is judged and denied by the good will, at least implicitly.

But such Immortality, implied by the reality of the idea of the good, is something more than the mere permanence of the conscious "ego." It is the permanence

of the "ego" raised to the conscious position, and the volition, of supreme and eternal values. It is, essentially, the realization of moral and spiritual personality.

Secondly, this Immortality (which is that of the Christian religion) is something more than the immortality implied in the very fact of human being. It is, indeed, a personal conquest. It is the attainment of reality defined in terms of moral value.

This doctrine with regard to Immortality as being something which must be gained or acquired by moral and spiritual endeavour is in accord with all positive faiths, and, more especially, with the evangelical message of Christianity. One must "keep the commandments" if one wills to enter into life. (St. Matt. XIX: 17). One must "run," in order to obtain the incorruptible crown. (I. Cor. IX: 24-25).

Thirdly, this Immortality is the climax of a spiritual evolution. As the material evolution in nature finds its goal, its completion and its significance in man, so must man enter immediately upon a higher spiritual evolution to find its fulfillment in the ideal man, the divine man.

Christian religion presents the prototype of this God-like man in the God-man, Jesus the Christ. Christ is the highest and most concrete revelation of God the Spirit to men; therefore Christ-likeness means the highest spiritual development of man.

Fourthly, this Immortality is (why not say it?) will rather than intellect, mystery rather than science, religious, rather than scientific, experience, hope rather than possession, divine promise rather than certitude of intuition. This Immortality is, in brief, faith.

Intellect, philosophy, science are able only to prove that "there can be" Immortality; but it is the will which affirms that it "does exist." Psychology and metaphysics

can demonstrate that "there must be" Immortality; but it is religious experience that solemnly proclaims that "there is" Immortality.

## II

Science, in spite of the indefinite possibility of its progress, will never succeed in deepening and strengthening the feeling of Immortality in men. It may gradually increase the force of its proofs as to the "non-repugnance" and the logicality of Immortality; but Religion alone has been, and will be, able to make Immortality felt and lived as an active and fecund reality.

It is from its religious character that Immortality derives its tremendous power and efficacy over humanity and the shaping of its destinies. If the expectation of Immortality resulted from a rational conviction, a certainty of intuition or dialectical evidence, it would have a very little part in the life of men.

In order to believe in Immortality, men have always needed to admit it not as a consequence of the analysis of the life and ways of the Spirit, but as a divine promise, proved by a kind of religious experience. So lacking in strength has always appeared the former basis, and so necessary the latter!

The divine words, addressed by the Master to the positivistic apostle Thomas: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (St. John XX: 29), which apply to all metaphysical reality, seem to be also true of Immortality.

## III

In Christianity, Christ's Resurrection is, according to the emphatic assertion of St. Paul, the central and all-dominating fact. Yet, let us dare to confess it, if Christ's

Resurrection were a thing which had no personal interest whatever, it is dubious whether there would be many disposed to admit it on the exclusive strength of the historical witness of the evangelical narrative.

But the faith which the apostles and other primitive Christians had in it, becomes gradually the faith of countless ones, and the basis of great ecclesiastical institutions. This faith may be pointed to as the most convincing and decisive argument for Immortality.

Historical evidence alone does not account for the raising of the doctrine of Immortality to be the central and most vital dogma of Christianity, unless we take it conjunctly with the "will to believe," whose witness has appeared to many philosophers, most particularly to Kant, a sufficient foundation for the construction of the whole moral life.

Often, even in our days, we have seen men (in whom the sentimental need of taking refuge in the faith in Immortality was strong) abandoning philosophy, in order to ask this or that among the authoritative Churches for the guarantees which they desperately wanted. So little men trust themselves and the witness of the interior "ego" in this matter! So inconsistent all desires of, and longings for, an ultra-earthly existence and happiness appear! So thick the shadow of death would fall on life, unless a ray of light, lighted above by a mysterious hand, rarefied it!

Death, no less than life, appears to men as an inconceivable thing, a contradiction and a mystery. All positive religions, eagerly accepted, liberate us from the painful suspicion that man may have been left in the dark of a complete ignorance as to what he is most interested in knowing.

To believe in Immortality as a conquest of moral personality, in the painful work of our self-constituting, is

not only faith, but, in a certain sense, the whole faith. To work for what transcends all concrete actualities is the will which is more than all single wills, and, consequently, before all concrete acts of willing, i. e. the "future."

What is to be actuated, what is always willed and never wholly completed, that exists in the present, and in my act of present willing, only as an exigency and a creation. The real, the actual, is not willed except for the "*un-real*," or, better, the "*ir-real*," the very soul and substance of that real, i. e. the future.

#### IV

Faith in God enters into the faith in Immortality. If there is God, He must be the unique God both of the dead and the living, or, rather, He must be "the God of the Living, and not of the dead" (St. Matt. XVII: 32). God's dear ones, those whom He loved and consecrated, live: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (St. John: XIV: 19).

Immortality is implicated in the very fact that God, through creation, and, more concretely, through the Incarnation of the Word, miraculously adds Himself to the natural history of men, and, though He is beyond it, He works in it, to establish His kingdom among men.

Earthly and visible history becomes, thus, the proscenium of true history, which develops behind the curtain. Earthly life is a preparation for, and an expectation of, the heavenly. To become deserving of it is the paramount scope of life. Its attainment is worth all our renunciations and self-sacrifices. To miss it is the supreme terror of existence.

Faith in God is not distinct from faith in Immortality. For, if our will is a will of the absolute and the infinite,

God is the only object that can present itself to the will as the absolute and infinite.

The infinite object serves to express the infinite subject, that is, the transcendence of the good-will, in its universality, over each single, concrete will.

If in the place of the word "will," we put "love," we shall have the definition of the Christian God.

But, let us repeat it once more, this Immortality is, and can only be, will and faith. It has its origin and foundation in the hidden and mysterious insertion of our empirical "ego" in the absolute and the universal Spirit.

The pretension to know, the desire for evidence, the revelation of the world beyond, is a contradiction "in adiecto." "To believe," says beautifully the great Italian Modernist Don Romolo Murri, "is both our condemnation and our divine pride."

Immortality is the flower of faith, and the flower of Immortality is a life, turned, like the magnetic needle of the mariner's compass, toward the north of the absolute.

. . . . *Death ever fronts the wise  
Not fearfully, but with clear promises  
Of larger life, on whose broad vans upborne  
Their outlook widens, and they see beyond  
The horizon of the present and the past,  
Even to the very Source and End of things.*

## CONCLUSION

Once, upon the Galilean hills, a voice was heard, saying: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (St. John: XI: 26). No other God-sent messenger, no other revealer of religion, ever uttered words like these. They are worthy of one who is both man and God.

To believe in Jesus, the Christ of God, means to believe in the eternal, the absolute, and to actuate it in life and action. It means to stand for a faith, a cause, an ideal. It means to work, fight and suffer for the sake of humanity. It means to think of life in terms of service, devotion, self-sacrifice. It means to enthrone the spirit, as the supreme of all realities: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing" (St. John: VI: 63).

Believing in Christ is beginning, here and now, that spiritual evolution which will find its completion in the beyond and the hereafter: "Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (I. Cor. XV: 50).

To have faith in Christ means to be ready to die, if need be, for the triumph of truth, love, justice, mercy, in brief, the universal spiritual reality. It means to lose oneself, in order to find oneself: "He that loseth his life, for my sake, shall find it" (St. Matt: X: 39).

The men who believe in Christ are the ones who have come to the point of realizing, in their minds as well as their lives, that education, science, art, political leadership, economical progress, social uplift, great and desirable things as they are, are not ultimate realities; that the greatest thing in the world is the soul of man, and that all the most splendid cultural and social conquests

are not worthy the slightest degree of spiritual and moral perfection.

To live for the highest of all causes, i. e. spiritual reality: here is the true act of faith. The self-sacrifice of the American soldier for the holy ideals of freedom, democracy and human brotherhood: here is the most transcending of all acts of life and will.

It is the firmest conviction, yes, and sweetest presentiment of the writer of these pages, that he, who thus lives and dies for God and men, enters, through a wide and magnificent doorway into the realm of Immortality.

#### Mors Ianua Vitae.

*Jesus lives! thy terrors now  
Can no longer death appall us:  
Jesus lives! by this we know  
Thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.  
Alleluia!*

*Jesus lives! henceforth is death  
But the gate of Life Immortal:  
This shall calm our trembling breath,  
When we pass its gloomy portal.  
Alleluia!*



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